

# THE TRIBES OF THE ASHANTI HINTERLAND

BY

CAPT. R. S. RATTRAY

WITH A CHAPTER BY

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THE NANKANSE (*continued*)*Guardian Spirits and Chameleons. Oaths and Revocation of Oaths. Witches. Ordeals*

THE word *segere* (pl. *sega*) has appeared (and will again appear) frequently throughout these pages. The almost exact equivalent of this word in England is 'guardian spirit',<sup>1</sup> with its reciprocal 'ward'. The desire of a spirit to adopt a child, or children—for one spirit may have several children under its charge—is made manifest through the soothsayer. The time of adoption varies from before birth, and while the child is still in the mother's womb, to any age during early childhood, or even later. The former, however, is the more usual period for adoption. The range of spirits from which these guardians are drawn appears to be almost without limit and to cover the whole spirit world, but they are normally drawn from the circle of the child's own ancestors, on both father's and mother's side. A *segere*, then, may be:

1. A human spirit; it will already have a *bagere* (shrine).
2. A spirit, human or otherwise, already domiciled in a soothsayer's shrine.
3. A *Yini* shrine.
4. A *Tobega*, the spirit of a person killed or murdered; already in some one's charge. &c., &c.

A father or mother does not become *segere* to his or her own child, nor does a male child have his maternal grandmother as his *segere*, 'because he will sacrifice to her in any case as a *ma kyeme* (great mother), but this maternal grandmother may become *segere* to her great-great-grandchild.

The following is a first-hand account taken down from the lips of my friend, the late Atinamologo.

'When I first married my wife, Asaandena, and before she conceived, I used to consult another soothsayer.<sup>2</sup> My father's spirit (Azere) and the spirits of my mother and of Azere's father used to tell me that my wife would one day conceive. She did indeed do so, and

<sup>1</sup> *Sege*, the verb, means to put some one or something in another person's charge; the noun *segere* seems equally applied to guardian and ward.

<sup>2</sup> Atinamologo was himself a soothsayer, but it is the custom of those who follow this profession, where their own private affairs are concerned, to go to another of their fraternity for advice.

delivered my son, Akandoe. When a new child arrives, it is a stranger (*sana*). I therefore went and consulted again, and Azere's ancestor told me—again through the soothsayer—that he had helped my wife to conceive and to deliver, that he himself was my child's *segere*, and that, therefore, I must get a fowl and flour. I took some flour and mixed it with water, and offered it to my father, Azere, saying: "Receive this water and drink, and reach your *Yaba* (ancestor), for he has said that he helped my child to be delivered." I then poured the water on Azere (i.e. on his shrine), and passed on to the second shrine and said: "You have already told me that you helped this, your *segere* child, to be delivered, and let its breath mount up to God, and that you would let it prosper." I then poured out the flour-water and sacrificed the fowl. My child, Akandoe, was now given to the spirit. While he is still young, I will sacrifice for him.'

I then asked Atinamologo if his child, when he grew up, would make a separate shrine for this guardian spirit, and he replied: 'As long as I and Akambere (the speaker's brother) are alive, my son will sacrifice with us at our compound, and when we die, he will inherit our shrine (the spirit in one of which is also his *segere*), but this spirit may become a *Yini*<sup>1</sup> to him during our lifetime, and live on the flat roof.'

Again: 'A child may begin to cry about the fourth day after it is born. The soothsayer, who is consulted, may then declare that a certain spirit wishes to be the child's *segere*. Next night, after giving that spirit water, the parents will notice that the child sleeps better, and they will know from this that what the *Baga* said was true. Next day this spirit will be given a fowl.

'When the child can walk, it will be taken to the shrine and will sit beside it while its father addresses the spirit, saying:

' "You said you would be *segere* to this child. To-day I bring your ward to you." The sacrifice is then offered, and the child's hair cut for the first time. This hair is carefully collected and put in the fowl's *uka*, or under a grain-store.<sup>2</sup>

'If a *segere* does not look after its ward properly, the latter may be taken away from that particular guardian spirit and given to another, but in that case care must be exercised to see that the second spirit is "stronger" than the first.

' "A *gomatia* (chameleon) (which happens also to have become a *segere*), is the most powerful of all *sega*." Any female *yaba* (ancestress)

<sup>1</sup> Again this curious use of the word *Yini* which I have noted before.

<sup>2</sup> 'A bad man can kill you, if he gets hold of your hair.' See also p. 303.

may become a chameleon—e.g. father's mother, father's mother's mother, mother's mother, mother's mother's mother. The spirit itself is in the iron (bangle, hoe, &c.), which is placed in the clay model of the chameleon, which in turn is fashioned on the side of a grain-store' (see Fig. 30). *Gomatia gyin bare* (The chameleon protects the grain-store).

'Any man who has a *kyem paka* (female ancestral spirit) which has become a chameleon, will thereafter respect that reptile, lifting it up on a stick and placing it, if alive, on a tree; if dead, touching it and then touching his own head.'

The word used in the vernacular for this kind of metempsychosis, is *nam*. It is difficult to translate, but the following are some of the senses in which it is used. *Ma kyema nam gomatia waam* (My senior mother (i.e. grand-, or great-grandmother) came and is (*nam*) a chameleon). *I'ini nam bono zono* (God is all things). *Name*, the noun, means a representation of anything. Just possibly the word means, 'is represented by'. 'Every spirit has some form in which it receives sacrifices.' *Mam so nam lia; mam ma nam baya* (My father is an axe, my mother is a bangle). 'My grandmother, Ataretulum, came to me as my guardian spirit; a soothsayer told me she had come. He also told me to find a hoe of my own. I made a representation of a chameleon on my grain-store (in clay) and put this hoe inside it. The grain-store is the place for a chameleon shrine.'

'A woman's *segere* cannot be with (in charge of?) her husband; when she wants to sacrifice<sup>1</sup> to it, she will hand the fowl to her brother.' This is really only another way of saying that a wife's *segere* does not come from her husband's side.

When a woman dies, her spirit may enter, i.e. use as a shrine:

- (1) An ankle- or arm-bangle (*nare* or *nugu baya*).
- (2) A nether grindstone.
- (3) A hoe.
- (4) A chameleon, represented by a clay model in bas-relief on a grain-store. A male spirit usually chooses an axe (*lia*) as its shrine.

'It is always a soothsayer who will say if a spirit has entered into any of these things. A man does not even make a mound for his father's axe until told to do so by a soothsayer, but will continue to use the axe in the shaft until then. It will be after "burning" the funeral that the spirit will come into the axe.'

<sup>1</sup> A woman may not consult a soothsayer or offer any sacrifice to a spirit, directly. A wife may give offerings to her late husband through her son.

A chameleon (shrine on the grain-store) is sacrificed to after each harvest and also before commencing to sow. The words spoken on these occasions are: 'Receive water, and may you reach your mother and do good to me when I farm'; and, after the harvest: 'I approached you with water before I planted, now receive fowls and guinea-fowls, for the early millet is ripe. May every one sleep well.'

'If the chameleon is my mother's mother, I do not give the offering directly, I will first tell the spirit of my mother what I am going to give her mother. If it is my father's mother, I will first tell my father's spirit and let him know that I am about to offer a sacrifice to his mother. My father's mother's spirit does not come to me while my father is still alive, but my mother's mother may do so while my mother is still alive.'

I am afraid that the above, which are mainly translations from statements taken down in the vernacular, may leave a rather confused idea in the mind of my reader. The position with regard to this particular class of spirits is, I believe, as follows:

The *segere* (guardian spirit) is already a spirit with a shrine in the form of *bagere* (earth mound), or a clay model of a chameleon, or a *bakologo* shrine, &c., in some one else's keeping, and it is already receiving offerings from that person, directly or indirectly, not as his *segere*, but as his ancestor or ancestress in the ordinary way. This spirit then expresses a wish (through the soothsayer) to become *segere*, or guardian spirit, to some one else. This person is a relation, but other than the person from whom it already receives offerings in its capacity as *Taba* (ancestor) *vis-à-vis* that person. Having become a *segere*, this spirit will now benefit in its dual capacity of ancestor and *segere*, and, what is equally important, its living custodian will also profit by the closer social tie created between the ward of this spirit and himself. He will also benefit materially to the extent of the various sacrifices which the ward of the *segere* brings, and in the eating of which he, the custodian of the shrine, assists. These somewhat mundane and culinary considerations should not, I feel certain, be wholly ignored. These social and material considerations are especially significant and far reaching where the *segere* spirit is one on the mother's side of the family, as in that case the obligations involved serve to lessen the gulf which patrilineal descent has tended to create between the paternal and maternal kindred-groups. The *segere* tie thus equalizes the inferiority of the latter.<sup>1</sup>

*Soba* (witches): when they wish to kill some one, they will first go

<sup>1</sup> Compare, in this context, the *ntoro* tie, in Ashanti.





FIG. 30. 'The chamelcon protects the grain-store'

to that person's *segere* and make a vow to give it water mixed with ground cowries. If the *segere* does not agree, the witch has not any power. *Tobega*, the spirit of a murdered person, may be *segere* to a child. My friend Aboya's *segere* is that of one of two co-wives who quarrelled with each other. One killed the other with her heavy brass bangle. The spirit of the dead woman later came and said she wished to be *segere* to her murderess's children, as she, the dead woman, had died without having any herself. A child who has a *tobega* as a *segere* wears three cowries round its neck. As already noted, a person takes the taboos which the *segere* spirit observed during life.

### *Oaths and Revocations of Oaths:*

We have already seen that one of the forms in which the question, 'To what totemic clan do you belong?' may be expressed is by asking, 'What oath do you swear?'<sup>1</sup> the answer being the particular totem of the person thus addressed. We have also seen that where the person so interrogated had acquired his *segere* from his mother's side, he might then, if he so wished, equally swear by the totem of his mother, i.e. of her brother, his maternal uncle.

In addition to the swearing by a clan totem, we have also had examples of oaths which are the exact parallel of the Ashanti *ntam*.<sup>2</sup> The aggrieved party seeks to deter another from some action by mentioning some calamity which had overtaken an ancestor, 'My father and an arrow'; 'my father and smallpox'. In the Northern Territories, however, unlike Ashanti, this conditional curse has never developed as a piece of legal machinery whereby a private dispute becomes a public wrong. The sanction is here still left to the spirit to enforce.

*Mam nze teja wa zuowa san mina yele wa, Yini da lu mam* (As I stand on this land, and if I know about the matter, may the sun not fall for me). *Sa tase mam* (May the lightning strike me).

To swear by a misfortune that had happened in a man's own family is permitted; 'if a stranger used the same words it would mean war'. Here is at least the form of the Ashanti adaptation.

Other examples of the conditional curse are:

*M'ss me* (My father).

*Fo wanye* (Wait and see).<sup>3</sup>

*Mam da ka eye n'ss wama* (I never did this to my father).

<sup>1</sup> *Fo pte de la bem?*

<sup>2</sup> See *Religion and Art in Asbanti*, Chapter XXII.

<sup>3</sup> Compare the Ashanti, *Tena ba na too be bu*. (Wait there and you will see).

*Fom ite mam se wa* (You would treat me like this?).

*Yini la kyima wam bo man la fom buro* (This thing which you are doing, God and the spirits will judge between us).

*Fom kate la nwana wa basa tega zui, fo kan ki pɔya, fo kan peke bia, fo kan nyoke bia ziri, fo nare nwana make bise* (You will wander thus and be worthless in the land; you will never carry a child under your arm; you will never have a child on your knee like this, and measure and see).<sup>1</sup>

This last example is that of a simple, not a conditional, curse. The ceremony of revocation is as follows:

'If my mother (or any relative) utters a curse upon me, I will go to some man respected in my section, and beg him to come to our compound. He will seek for a calabash, some water, and a piece of charcoal, and come and implore my mother to take back the curse (*puse*) saying: "Blow away your curse. When you swore thus, you swore against all the children. If your curse were to follow the boy alone, it would not be necessary to take it back; we would say that his foolishness should follow him, and if it destroyed him, we would let it destroy him, but as it (the curse) will follow them all, I say, 'Blow it out of your mouth'."

He will then hand the calabash, which contains the water and a piece of charcoal, to my mother. She will bite off a piece of the charcoal and crunch it up in her mouth and say:

'So-and-so (mentioning the name of the intercessor), do you not say I must bring up (*uke*) what I have swallowed? Well, Elders quarrel when one will not do what another asks. On account of that, I will blow out this water.' She then fills her mouth with water and spits it out saying, '*Pu!* bad mouth'; a second and third time she does so and says the same words, but the fourth time<sup>2</sup> she says, '*Pu!* no' *soye* (*Pu!* good mouth).

The person cursed will find a guinea-fowl, which will be handed to the intercessor, who will have it cooked, after which he and the one who has uttered the curse will eat together.

The manner in which a vow made before birth is revoked has already been described.

*Witchcraft* (*Soa*): certain persons who can 'see', or 'fly', or who 'have an eye', who are really witches themselves, but do not eat others, may report to the head of a section that certain other witches are killing people. The head of the section will then summon all the adults of

<sup>1</sup> Meaning obscure.

<sup>2</sup> A male would do so only three times.

that section to come and drink from his *yaba doyo* (ancestor's horn). He will make a proclamation from the housetops saying, 'To-morrow, every one must gather here at my house and will I give you all a drink out of a horn, because So-and-so is lying on a sick-mat and we have already told you to leave him alone, and you refuse.'

As the horn is handed to each one to drink he says: 'My work in this section is to see that women bear children. Some people are trying to spoil this, so take this horn and drink, and those who are preventing this duty of mine, may our ancestor ask them (the cause).'

If a witch is accused personally and denies her (or his) guilt, she will take a poisoned arrow and stab herself (*lu piim*). 'Witches of different sections will meet and share their victims, but a witch cannot kill a person to whom she is unrelated. When a witch wishes to eat some one, she causes that person's soul to enter an animal—a sheep, goat, cow, or even a wild animal. When such an animal is killed and eaten, the "black" people know that they are eating a human being, but to ordinary people, the witches seem to be eating out of an empty plate. The person so eaten sickens and dies. Witches, when they die, become *kogero*, 'ghost' (s. *koko*).<sup>1</sup>

A person who dies of snake-bite is often said to have been killed by a witch because witches turn into snakes and also animals. 'Witches are recognized by lights at night; they are more numerous now than formerly.'

<sup>1</sup> 'When a *koko* touches any one, that person's hair will grow long and he will become thin, and will grow white and die. The feet of a *koko* are turned back to front.'

THE NANKANSE (*continued*)*Ordeals. Amulets, Fetish, and other Shrines*

THE word *psiga*, a noun formed from the verb *pse*, to test, is used for 'ordeal' in the vernacular.

There are five kinds of ordeals known to me; these are:

(a) *Psig'-kyena*, lit. the big ordeal, or boiling shea butter ordeal.

(b) *Gunguno-psiga*, a small pot inside which burning silk cotton is put; the pot is then clapped over the stomach. A vacuum is thus created which draws the skin into the pot.

(c) *Balaya psiga*: Splitting down the branch of a *balaya* tree without breaking the branch.

(d) *Pema lua psiga*: The ordeal of the stabbing arrow.

(e) *Yaba doyo psiga*: The ordeal of the ancestor's horn (already described).

Ordeals are resorted to for cases of witchcraft (already described), adultery, *kabuse pɔya* (lit. unconfessed sins of women), and theft, *na' yiyem* (lit. creeping people). The ordeal is administered where the accused protests innocence.

For the 'big ordeal', the permission of the *Ten'dana* must be obtained, 'to quench the fire on the land.' The ceremony is as follows. The accused person gives the *Ten'dana* a sheep and beer, a fowl, a guinea-fowl, and flour. The ordeal apparatus, called simply *psiga*, is brought by a special person who is known as 'the owner of the *psiga*' (*psiga-dana*); his fee is a hoe and a cock. He brings a pot, into which he puts shea butter supplied by the accused. A fire is lit and on this the pot is set, and a piece of iron or a ring is dropped inside. The *psiga-dana* now addresses the accused saying: 'Come and take out the ring.' He comes forward and stands near the fire and says: 'If I knew the woman, let the *psiga* seize me; if I did not, let it catch the owner of the woman.' As he says this, the 'doctor' takes some liquid 'medicine' and pours it into the fire, which flares up to a great height and even prevents the accused from approaching the pot. 'If however, he is innocent, the fire dies down and the melted butter in the pot becomes cool and the accused picks out the ring.'

When the ceremony is over, the *Ten'dana* will quench the fire. He puts some beer in a calabash, adds some flour, and having swept all the

ashes together into a heap, he pours the beer over them saying: 'They have brought beer, and a sheep and fowls, to quench the fire which I have kindled on you (the Earth), receive them and return to your sleep and permit the rain to fall.' He then sacrifices, first the fowl, then the guinea-fowl, and last of all the sheep. If the accused were found guilty, he would have to pay a fine, if innocent, he might claim a similar amount from his accuser.

The *psiga-dana* is given a sheep and has beer brewed for him by the one who won his case. 'The *Ten'dana* is only called in because of the fire which had to be lit upon the land which it was necessary for him to quench.'

*Amulets and Fetishes*: The following are the names and uses of those most commonly found.

*Noa doko* (lit. the pot of mouths; also sometimes called *Nimone doko*, red eye pot). (In Isala the same fetish is called *Niha*, hot mouth). This is a fetish against praise, which, in some curious way, is supposed to be able to hurt the one about whom it is expressed. 'A man's crops may fail, his children die, his fowls die; this may mean that some one has praised these things. Against this danger, a man had "a mouth pot".'

The taboos of this, and other Northern Territory fetishes, are very reminiscent of some of the Ashanti *suman* taboos. They include the following avoidances:

The mention of the word *namboa* or *mwarega* (the moon) when the food is cooked which the man who owns the fetish is about to eat; passing behind its owner while he is eating; lifting up a burning faggot while the cooking pot is being stirred; the mention of the word *lika*, darkness, while food is being prepared; mentioning the word for 'cat' just as he is about to eat; any one to enter his house while he is eating and say, 'I have made a lucky stumble.'

If the owner of a 'mouth pot' continues to eat after any of the above events have happened, 'his fetish will become a dead thing, and he will have to make a new ceremony and sacrifice to it to get its power back again.'

*Pentia*<sup>1</sup>: This is a fetish against arrow wounds. It is generally in the keeping of one man in the section. It is tended by a young virgin who must remain chaste and may not even sit on the same mat with a male, or serve a male with food. On setting out to fight, all the warriors will enter the room where the *pentia* shrine is kept, and this virgin will bathe them with medicine, after which they will take their cow-tail

<sup>1</sup> See also p. 175. This fetish is called *dobo* by the Isala.

switches and cast them over the compound wall, recovering them when they come outside. Some of the taboos of the *pentia* are those of the *noa doko* (see above).

When this young girl, who is priestess of the *pentia* shrine, reaches puberty, she is released from her vows and duties and her place is taken by another, but not before the owner of the shrine has performed the ceremony of 'sweeping' down her arms with stalks of rushes, saying as he does so, 'I am to-day sweeping you to transfer the shrine to this new girl.'<sup>1</sup>

*Pysleytia* (lit. tree for seeking a wife): 'When a man is unable to get a wife, he will seek for a man who knows how to make a *pysleytia*. This man will tell the seeker to get a black hen, a red cock, and a black cow-tail, and to make a new *kyia* (calabash) and also to find some fibre called *sua* (a kind of inedible bean). This doctor will seek for the bark of a tree called *kenkanso*, which he will take off the side of the tree where the early morning sun's rays strike, and from the side where the setting sun's rays strike. This is to impart the power of 'turning.' The calabash is set on the ground and the cow-tail and the bark are laid upon it. The doctor then takes the black hen, cuts its throat, and lets the blood fall on the calabash while he says: "If you are indeed a *pysleytia*, let the man get a wife at once." He next sacrifices the red cock. The feathers of the fowls are plucked and interwoven with a string which is made out of fibre from the *sua* tree; three cowries are attached to the string which is then tied on to the cow-tail. The fowls are boiled; the bark is cut up, ground, put in a pot, and mixed with shea butter. Grain food is prepared, some of the bark is also mixed with this. A piece of the liver of both fowls and some meat off the legs is put on the fetish—i.e. in the calabash—and the rest of the sacrifice is partaken of by the two men.

'The fetish is now complete, and the owner will take the calabash home and hang it above the doorway of his room. He will now set off to test the efficiency of the fetish. He may find that the woman now loves him, but that her parents do not agree to the marriage. He then returns home and takes the tail and binds the fibre string—with the feathers interlaced—round and round it, saying as he does so: 'I am tying So-and-so' (mentioning the father's name); 'I am tying So-and-so'; (naming the girl's mother). When night comes, he sets forth to go to the woman's compound. If the fetish has taken effect, he will find the

<sup>1</sup> We shall see that an exactly similar custom is performed over the dead before burial, see p. 391.

whole household asleep; dogs will not bark; he will go to where the girl lies asleep, waken her, and she will follow him home. He must remember to untie the string when he reaches home or her parents will die or become sick. Later on the woman's brothers will follow her, and the marriage formalities be carried out. Women obtained in this manner do not always remain. The power of the fetish may wear off.

'If a woman loves you very much, she will let you shave the hairs off her vagina. This will give you great power over her. If she ever leaves you, you can prevent her bearing children.

'The cost of a *pypleytia* is one thousand cowries and a hoe.'

*Dunpalega*: This shrine is said to be in a grove near Tongo, which is in charge of a *Ten'dana*. It is stated to be of a very deadly nature, and is invoked by men whose wives have run off and married some one else. The private property of any person who dies in consequence of this fetish being invoked against him, is forfeited to the grove.

*Lua* (lit. tying)<sup>1</sup>: This fetish is used for 'tying' dangerous wild animals, and enemies. It consists, generally, of the tail of a cow, and the string used is a cow's vein. A man must be careful when using it, to avoid tying up his own shadow; for this reason the person invoking it generally does the tying, holding the fetish behind his back. It is a serious offence for a man to use it against any one in his own family circle.

*Bare la doko* (iron peg and pot): The person using it squats down beside these things. The pot contains the 'roots' so indispensable in these amulets. He speaks thus. 'If you are a thing, this matter which is coming, do not let me suffer from it.' He repeats these words three times, and the third time drives the iron peg into the ground with a stone. Only 'black' people (i.e. those who are witches) are supposed to possess this fetish.

*Nweleya* (lit. to bend aside, turn off at a tangent): It was formerly in the possession of heads of sections and of *Ten'dana*, but is now used by Chiefs. It was formerly invoked as follows. If war or disease or famine was threatened, the people went to the compound of him who had the *nweleya* in his custody. A fire was lit, and fed with unrefined shea butter and cattle dung. The Elder took a special spear and drove it into the middle of the fire saying as he did so, 'If you are a thing, divert this matter from us, and I will give you a black sheep.'

<sup>1</sup> Known as *Vova* in Isala. The *kabere suman* of the Ashanti, see *Religion and Art in Asbanti*, Chapter II.



This fetish is now used by Chiefs to encourage litigation, a curious reversal of its original functions.<sup>1</sup>

*Nayyigem* or *Lebegere tiim* (thieving or transformation medicine): 'This gives a man power to change into an animal, a tree, a needle, or a tick.'

*Gule bagere*: This is used in connexion with live stock. It consists of the horn of a bush cow placed in a pot which is kept in the cattle-kraal. When the cattle increase and thrive, a bull is sacrificed upon it. Its taboo is for any one to stir its owner's beer with a grain stalk and for him then to drink that beer. The bull is sacrificed to the accompaniment of the following words:

'If you are a *gule bagere*, receive this cow and prevent lions, hyenas, leopards, and 'cattle death' from catching these cows.' It also protects goats and sheep and fowls.

*Barega tiim*: When two men are clandestinely, and unknown to each other, both having intercourse with the same woman, it is thought, that should one fall ill from any cause, and the second man look upon him, the former will die, unless protected beforehand by being possessed of this amulet.

*Va'ebego*<sup>2</sup>: A fetish in connexion with the farm (*vaam*-farm). 'The doctor who knows how to make this shrine, will tell you to get a root from a salt-lick frequented by wild animals and a root from a salt-lick frequented by the cattle, a water turtle's shell and a land turtle's shell, a large flat stone, and a calabash. When you have secured these things, and the medicine-man arrives, you will give him a brown guinea-fowl and a black hen. The calabash is placed upon the stone along with the roots, and the fowl is sacrificed upon them: "If you are a grain (producing) thing, let the corn become like the hammer and anvil of the smith; do not let it be like the wind." The roots are then burned, ground into powder, and mixed with grain food; some is placed on the calabash and stone. Later, the stone is placed on top of the grain store; the calabash is hung up where the women grind.<sup>3</sup> The taboos of this fetish are for the women who are grinding, to make flour-water for themselves or even for any stranger who may drop in while they are at work, before they have quite finished grinding; its other taboo is to allow the grain store ever to become completely empty. Some of the

<sup>1</sup> This curious reversal of the original function of a supernatural power to stir up strife has its exact parallel in Ashanti.

<sup>2</sup> Farms are also protected from thefts of tree spirits, which eat the soul of the corn, by a cross made on flat stones with ground charcoal (*Tisi tiim*). <sup>3</sup> See p. 253.

ground roots, if rubbed on the arms, waist, and legs, 'will prevent tiredness when working on the farm.'

*Yoomdoko*: 'For taming wild animals and women. You take the liver of a small house-bat, the heart of a house-mouse, some hairs of a cat, the *tudentase* (lit. companion) insects, always found sticking together, a house-louse, *tentabere* seeds, which always stick to a man's legs, and the nose of a dog.<sup>1</sup> You pound them all up together and make into pills (*musere*). You slip some into your wife's pipe or into your mother-in-law's food or milk.' The taboo of the above is to let a mouse jump over the pills. My informant then continued, 'these ingredients are also the "roots" (*nyaye*) used in some other fetishes.' This is a good example of the use of this word, which is employed in a wider sense than the word implies; the word 'roots' covers almost any ingredient used in the preparation of a shrine, or of medicine.

*Zusoytia* (lit. good-head (i.e. lucky) tree): 'A man may always be going to places, and yet never have any gifts given to him, or when women choose, he may never be among those chosen.<sup>2</sup> This means he has a *zu-beo*—a bad, unlucky, head. As he wishes to have a "good head," he seeks for the good-head-tree-fetish. This consists of the tail of a cow, and a pot with "roots"; he keeps this pot in his room, and if he is going anywhere, he sacrifices upon it; saying: "If you are a thing, let every one love me where I am going." The tail he then carries with him.'

*Waykorega*: 'When a man is bitten by a snake, he seeks for some one who owns *waykorega*. This man comes with *perega* roots<sup>3</sup> and a tail. He sacrifices a red cock and a black hen over them saying: "If you are a real *korega*, enter into this tail and let this child sleep well, and you will have your reward." (A goat, a hoe, and some fowls). A fire is now lit above a pile of stones, and when these are hot, they are dropped into a calabash containing water which has been taken from the pot in which the roots had been placed. The patient is held over this and steamed until he breaks out into a perspiration. Next he is splashed over with the hot water, and immediately after with cold water. This treatment is repeated twice a day for three days. If the patient is then alive, beer is prepared and *tuntum* seeds cooked, and the stones, the roots, the ashes of the fire, and the fowls' feathers, are all cast away at the cross-roads. The doctor is then paid his fee. If the man dies, he does not receive anything.'

<sup>1</sup> *Abono nyuse pogose too бага* (So-and-so smells women like a dog) is said of a rake.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 2, p. 392.

<sup>3</sup> I found the same roots used for snake-bite among other tribes.

The above description was given me by my friend Aboba, and relates his own experiences. He further stated, 'When I was bitten, blood came from my nose, ears, and mouth, and anywhere on my body where I had a sore place. They kept me awake three days and nights, or I should have dreamed I was having intercourse with women, after which, when I got better, I would have become impotent. The snake that bit me was killed and was tied on a stick beside the roots which the doctor brought.'

*Ti'bagere* (tree shrines): 'Trees in the bush are "bad-trees" (*ti-bese* or *tisi-yalese*). We do not make offerings to these, but we protect ourselves against them by *tisi-tiim* (trees' medicine). Trees to which we sacrifice are (a) Those we sit under, which have already become friendly; (b) Trees which are shrines of human spirits or have become *Tini*. This *Tini* may be my own, or it may have already been in possession of an ancestor. The following relates how a *kenkaya* tree near my compound became the *Tini* of my father.

'My father told me (Aboba) that his grandfather once went to the river Atipimpeligo<sup>1</sup> to set his fish traps. The following day, when he went to examine them, he found a stone in the mouth of one of the traps. He consulted a soothsayer, and was told that this stone was his father's *Tini* and was to be taken home and set under the *kenkaya* tree along with a pot which was to be placed between its branches. He carried the stone home, and next morning found the fish traps full of fish. He sold these, and bought a dog, and again consulted the *baga* man, who told him that the dog was part of the *Tini*. The dog died, and its skull was placed on the stone. When I sacrifice I say, "God of my father, Akamologo, rise up and reach this stone, and this dog, and pot, and tree, and accept this offering and do me good." I gave some of my children to the tree as its wards (*segere*).'

*Kole'bagere* (a river shrine): 'Before a man makes a farm near a river, he will consult a *baga*, who will tell him he must take a stone from there, and that this stone is the *bagere* (shrine) of that river and that its *paya* (power) is in the stone and that it must be given offerings. The power of a river is in God, because without rain it cannot get water.' (My informant here in his narration lapsed into the first person.) 'When I find this stone, I go and let the soothsayer know. He tells me to sacrifice a fowl and give it some water. I do so, saying: "Rise up and receive this water and fowl; I wish to cut the bush here to make a new farm; he (the *baga*) says you are the river. I give you

<sup>1</sup> Named after a sacred grove.

this in order to get a good head, and that my grain may become good, and in order that, if I grow tobacco, it too may be good." When I have sowed and harvested, I return with a fowl and flour and say, "Accept, because you have done me good." When my tobacco is plucked and made into balls, it (the river) may say (through the soothsayer) that it deserves a goat. I will buy it one with some of my tobacco and give it, along with a fowl and flour, saying: "Protect me so that I may be able to come next year and join you."

*Tingane* (sacred grove): A grove may be sacred because it is the abode of an ancestor (e.g. Avila *tingane*), or because it is the abode of a spirit of the land (e.g. *Asakana*), or because it is the abode of a river (spirit), e.g. *Ateyabono*. "When a sacrifice is made at the grove, it takes it to the river." When a shrine has been inherited, then the name of the original owner of it is mentioned, and he passes on the offering to the spirit concerned. The original owner would have made the offering direct to the spirit.<sup>1</sup>

"When you sacrifice to a shrine, you ask it to receive and mount to God, to ask things for you. They, the spirits, do not give gifts by their own power. God (*I'ini*) has the rain and it rains. All grain goes back to *I'ini* when harvested. Without rain there would be no corn. Everything is in God. If I ask my father to punish some one in our family, he can do so by his own power. When that person dies I must not mourn, but if I ask my father for crops and children, he has to climb to God (*I'ini*)."

The following was the answer to my question as to what was the difference between *I'ini* and other shrines.

"You may sacrifice to your father and mother, and any one may eat of the sacrifice. When you sacrifice to your *I'ini*, no one except you may eat of it. Any one else who did so would fall sick. All people are not equal, some are "lighter" than others, or have more riches. One who is well off or powerful will be told by the soothsayers that his wealth or power was given by God. That person must therefore find this and this, and place these things in his compound and sacrifice to them. These are then called *I'ini* (God), who gave you riches. The soothsayer will say, "Take this iron; take this stone; add a pot; do not think that you got your riches by your own efforts. These things are your *I'ini*, who has entered into them." The spirit in the soothsayer's shrine can see other spirits, and can climb to God, and he has seen that

<sup>1</sup> The above quotation is valuable as showing how easy it is to confuse the nature of the spirit which is receiving an offering.

these things are *Yini*. You must not let any one else share your *Yini* with you. *Yini* is not a human spirit (*kyima*) that it can go to any one; it goes only to that one whom *Yini* has chosen. *Yini*, himself, is far, and we cannot get him, only some of his power. The sun is the son of *Yini*. *Yini* is more powerful than a (spirit) *bagere*, we cannot reach to him; we cannot mount to him; even winged-creatures cannot. Spirits in *bagere* reach *Yini*; we do not know how. When we give our offerings, we ask the *bagere* to eat the things and return to God and beg things for us from him. If a *bagere* does not return to God, to get what you want, you sacrifice in vain. Only when you have a shrine called a *Yini* shrine, do you sacrifice to it directly. A *Yini* shrine is always on the flat roof. Every adult male has one. If you are still living in your father's compound, you keep your own *Yini* shrine on the *gosego* (flat roof) of your mother's *deo* (Compare the Isala, "spirit of God"). The only other roof-shrine may be your father who has been killed by an arrow or who has died of small-pox; he may then become *Yini* to you, but does not become a spirit (human?) *bagere*.'

'A *Yini* may be worn as a bangle while its pot is on the roof. A cow or bull may be found to be *Yini* to some one. It may not then be killed or sold, or used to buy a woman, nor may any of its "clan". It is sacrificed to by having the blood of the sacrifice smeared on its foreleg. Such a cow may be left in the open; no lion will touch it. When it dies, its horns will be placed on the flat roof and become a *Yini* shrine. So also, a wild animal killed by a hunter may become a *Yini* to some one. A *Yini* may become a *bakologo*; it is known as a *Yini bakologo*.'

*Katinwoya*<sup>1</sup> (the wandering, i.e. hunting calabash): 'This is a medicine that will help a man to kill animals. You go to some one who knows how to prepare it. He will tell you to fetch a dog, and each of your sons who have reached puberty, to bring a black fowl and a new calabash. The medicine-man brings his "roots", and all the calabashes are placed together along with the bows and quiver of myself and of my sons. The man who is preparing the fetish, first sacrifices the fowl saying: "If you are a proper hunting-calabash, then, when we go hunting, let us kill a beast." He lets the blood fall upon the calabash and 'roots'. Next, he kills the dog and allows its blood to fall on these things. Grain food is prepared; the fowls are cooked, and the dog is roasted whole. The roots are put in a pot with a hole in it and burned and then ground up and mixed with shea butter, salt, and peppers, and some of this is then mixed with the grain food. The livers of the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IX.

fowls and of the dog and some of the meat are laid on the calabashes. The remainder of the meat is eaten by those present, but not by women. The outside of the calabashes is smeared with the shea butter. A branch is now set up on the kitchen midden, and the calabashes are hung on it; they must not be brought into the house or people who touched them would become blind. When an animal is killed, its blood is rubbed on the calabashes. One of the taboos of this fetish is for any one to throw refuse over the compound wall. The one who makes the fetish is given a sheep. The owners wear the calabashes on their heads when they go hunting (see Fig. 7). Before wiping off sweat from the brow, the calabash must be removed or its owner would go blind. Each calabash is given a name, e.g. *Zokko*, *Boya*, *Ba*, *Dagbana*, &c. A hunter, on wounding an animal (which then seems likely to escape) will call out the name of his calabash three times, and then say:

“May the penis of the one who eats my beast, become like a log of wood to rest the back upon; his house become overgrown with thorns (*dozunse*); his walls break down, and red pigeons scratch, and tobacco grow, within his ruined compound.”

These calabashes are also used to protect farms against thieves; if any one but the owner takes anything from the farm, he will become blind, and even the owner, before taking anything, must first remove it from the stick where it hangs.

*Naamdoyo* (the horn of Chieftainship): This consists of a ram's horn and a pot. The horn is set in the middle of the tails of cows which have been sacrificed over the horn, which becomes a kind of sceptre of Chieftainship, which the Chief carries in his hand.

The soothsayer will, from time to time let the Chief know when this sceptre desires a sacrifice. On these occasions, the horn is removed from its surrounding tails, and laid on top of the pot. The blood from the sacrifice is collected in this pot and some is sprinkled over the horn with the words:

‘Tusugo and Gonwa and Abonposogo (Ancestors), rise and come and sit on this skin and receive your things.’ The heads of sections and the *Ten'dana* are present. The Chief himself makes the sacrifice. The pot is kept beneath a tree outside the Chief's compound.

## XXVIII

THE NANKANSE (*continued*)*Tobega,<sup>1</sup> Tuko, Tala, and Dulum*

**T**OBEGA, or *tubega*, is what one person who kills another in war or by murdering him is, in consequence, said to acquire. It appears to me to be the equivalent of the Ashanti *sasa*. The word is also, by metonymy, used for the shrine which is made for such a spirit and also for the ceremony in connexion with its preparation. The reason that a man, who has killed or murdered another, has to make *tobega*, is that by having done so, he has deprived a spirit of his right to receive the customary sacrifices from his son,<sup>2</sup> and he must therefore take this spirit in his charge and make the offerings to it which it would, under ordinary circumstances, have received from a member of its own family. The following amplifies the account already given<sup>3</sup> of the ceremony in connexion with the preparation of a *tobega* shrine.

‘When you kill a man, you go to a medicine-man, who knows how to perform the ceremony. He must himself have killed some one. He will tell you to fetch a red dog, a red cock, and a black hen. You will make beer and get the skin of a male *tobega* (a species of squirrel) and a ram’s horn. The doctor will come with “roots” and offer beer and flour on the skin and horn; he will sacrifice the fowls, taking great care that the blood does not touch the black tip of the *tobega*’s tail; next he will kill the dog and say:

“So-and-so has killed you; if you are a bad person, go far away and leave him alone.”’

A murderer must take care never to eat any food prepared by the relations of the dead man.<sup>4</sup>

The roots are cut up and boiled in a pot; the murderer’s head is shaved, and he is bathed with very hot water. The dog’s tail, the skin of the *tobega*, and the horn are bound together and hung up inside the *zoyo* hut. Every new season’s crops are given to this shrine before any of the household may eat; beer, fowls, and a red dog are also sacrificed to it twice a year. No one, except the owner of a *tobega*,

<sup>1</sup> *Baluri* in Isal. If you do not have it, the man killed will drive you mad; *Tobega* is given first of new crops.

<sup>2</sup> Unless he becomes *T’ini* to him.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 203.

<sup>4</sup> ‘If you do so, you will have *dulum*’; *vide* below.

may eat of these offerings. The owner of a *tobega* invites all the other 'murderers' in his town to dine with him on these occasions.

*Tobese dana* (owners of *tobega*) (pl. *tobse*) are very proud of the fact. In case of a *tobega* ceremony held for a murdered woman, the murderer has to go through the performance of pretending to do all the work usually done by a woman—gathering leaves, collecting guinea-corn stalks for firewood, fetching water, cooking, &c.

*Tuko*. A man who is supposed to have been the cause, or who was implicated before the event, in the death of another, but who is not the actual murderer, is said to have '*tuko*'. He is a kind of accessory before the fact. E.g. A asks B where C is to be found; B directs A who then goes and kills C; A has *tobega*, B has *tuko*.

*The Tuko Ceremony*. 'When my father was a Chief, and made a new market, and the Talense came to it; there was a quarrel, and a man called A—— S—— hit a Talense man and killed him. The Talense came and made war in which about four or five men were killed. After the war, my father sent for a Winduri man called Aba to come and set a *tuko* pot for us, as we were the cause of their deaths, owing to having organized the market.

'He told us to get the skin of a *tuko* (a kind of squirrel). Aba (the medicine-man) came, bringing also his own *tuko* and "roots". When he arrived, we gave him a black sheep, a brown guinea-fowl, and a black hen. A pot was set in the cattle kraal, and the "roots" cut up, placed in the pot, and boiled. The sacrifices were then made upon the skin, with these words addressed to the spirits of those killed: "Receive these offerings, and may this house sleep coolly; depart with your bad people."

'Every one in our compound was then shaved and bathed with the water in which the roots had been boiled. After bathing, we ate the sacrifices and some of the boiled roots, which had been mixed with shea butter. Some of the medicine was set aside for our relations who had not been able to attend the ceremony. Some of the roots were put inside the skin, and this was tied very firmly on the roof, inside the *zoyo* hut. It is a very serious matter if this skin bag is ever knocked down.'

If a man (or woman) by his conduct drives another to commit suicide, the former has *tuko*.

There is 'black' and 'white' *tuko*. White *tuko* is also called *tala*; it is a less direct responsibility. To become liable to incur *tuko*, some one must have been killed. *Tobega* is personal to the slayer; *tuko* is



shared by all members of a family,<sup>1</sup> in a greater or lesser degree. The idea underlying this conception of moral responsibility affords an explanation of one of the chief reasons for the difficulty in obtaining evidence in any murder trial. Were the accused to be hanged, the witness and his whole family would have *tuko*.

I am informed that, during the Great War, Chiefs and Head-men who recruited soldiers and carriers, who later were killed or died, were all considered as having black *tuko*, and had to perform the ceremony described.

*Dulum*. This word appears to be nearly the equivalent of the English 'conscience'. A man has '*dulum*' when he accepts hospitality from another whom he is always talking against, or whom he has otherwise injured. The family of a murdered man is, in consequence, always trying to get the murderer to eat some food which they have prepared. An antidote against this kind of 'poisoning' is to steal some grain from the family of the murdered man and mix it with the medicine used in making *tobega*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this case, the *sɔ̃* relations.

<sup>2</sup> A similar belief exists among the Isala.



FIG. 31. The soothsayer (*baga*) and his bag

THE NANKANSE (*continued*)*Soothsayers*

IF I were asked to name the most conspicuous, though not necessarily most important feature in Northern Territory religious practices, I would, I think, select the cult of the soothsayers with their consulting shrines. A religious, that is to say, a spiritual influence, lies behind almost every action in the life of these people. Their only means of interpreting this influence and transforming it into action—beneficial, protective, or merely negative—is by means of, and through, their soothsayers.

Most of my Northern Territory friends seemed, almost, to live at the soothsayers. Times without number, I have wandered along in the cool of the evening to the compound of a friend, and on inquiring where he was, would be told that he had gone off to the *baga* man (see Fig. 31). Sure enough, I would find him there, squatting in front of the soothsayer, with one hand upon his magic wand (see Fig. 35), in—what seemed to me—a pitiful endeavour to try to discover why one or the other of the hundred and one disappointments or worries which assail all of us in this work-a-day world, should have malignantly fallen his way. The shrines themselves, also, especially in the densely-populated North Eastern area, almost assume the proportions of a feature in the landscape, so numerous are they, with their striped, or ringed, or spotted symbolisms (see Figs. 5 and 6, &c.). Many examples of this cult have already been encountered in the preceding pages, but I think, before I go any further, my readers might like to hear something of its technique. With this object in view, the appliances used by the soothsayer will be examined in detail, and an actual séance attended and described. We shall then understand more clearly what is implied when we read, 'a soothsayer is consulted', a phrase which is encountered so frequently in these pages.

*Terms employed:* A soothsayer is *baga*, pl. *bagaba*, but he is, as often as not, spoken of as the '*bakologo*'. *Bakologo* means literally, *baga-kologo*, the soothsayer's bag, or sack, but in this case becomes, by metonymy, applied to the owner of such a bag. The consultant is called *bogera*; the verb 'to consult' is *boye*, and the act of consultation

is *bogero*. A soothsayer's bag (see Fig. 31) which contains all the paraphernalia of his trade, as already stated, is called *ba'kologo* or more explicitly *ba'kol'goyo*, i.e. soothsayer's skin bag. The generic name for the whole of the contents of this bag is *yala* (s. *yale*); the same word is used for refuse, and afterbirth. The soothsayer's wand is called *ba'kol'dore*.

*Contents of a Soothsayer's Bag:* The particular bag which I examined contained the following articles:

1. *A rattle called бага-senyaka.* The shape is as illustrated (see



FIG. 32

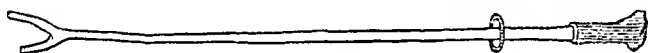


FIG. 33

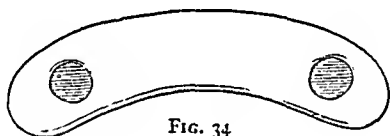


FIG. 34

Fig. 32). The handle is bound with cowhide; it contains seeds of *twaiga*; the hole, through which the rind of the gourd from which it is made had been extracted, is filled up with shea butter. This rattle is used for calling the spirit.

2. *The wand or stick* is as illustrated (see Fig. 33). The fork is for placing the thumb against. This particular stick had an iron ring upon it. It is made from the wood of a tree called *go*.

The butt end is of iron, and this is 'the business end' of the wand, being used to beat against 'the soothsayer's stones'.

3. *The ba'kol'kuga*, or 'soothsayer's stones', but in this case two flat iron disks let into a slab of wood, as illustrated (see Fig. 34). These disks lie in wood in shallow sockets, out of which they can easily be tilted. The soothsayer constantly hammers them with the iron-shod butt of his wand during a consultation.

4. *A piece of string*: known in the soothsayer's jargon as *sz*, i.e. 'father'.



FIG. 35. 'With one hand upon his magic wand'

5. *A piece of pumpkin shell* (*pum-pum pəkə*): symbolizing 'mother'.
6. *Two broken pieces of calabash* (*wane*): referring to 'woman'.
7. *A ball, out of the stomach of an old cow* (*suri*): signifying 'death', or 'danger'; *suri* means literally, heart.
8. *A corn-cob* (*kareyen dibre*): signifying 'food'.
9. *Rind of a pumpkin* (*wan'kane*): 'seed', 'children', 'property'.
10. *Vertebra of a fowl* (*wolonwoko*): designating a 'segere' (guardian spirit).
11. *Dog's lower jaw* (*ba-pu-yaga*): something about a dog; perhaps a sacrifice of a dog.
12. *The seed of an ago palm*<sup>1</sup> (*konkologo*): means a 'house', or a 'room'.
13. *A pot* (*duko*): implies an 'offering' of some kind.
14. *Small cow horn* (*doyo or ile*): 'medicine'; also may imply an 'ancestor'.
15. *A miscellaneous assortment of old iron*, including a bangle, an axe, bolts, and nuts, a piece of the stem of an old umbrella. All these things refer to a 'spirit', human or divine.
16. *Two small stones*, known as 'the soothsayer's rocks'. These stones are used as follows. The soothsayer wets one side of each stone with his tongue and throws them down; if they fall with both the wetted sides upwards, 'that is gladness and laughter'; if alternate wet and dry, 'consent'; both dry, 'refusal'.
17. *A vertebrae of a goat*: this is known as 'koa', a 'voice', an 'utterance'; it refers to a vow made prior to birth, before God (see page 136).
18. *The foot of a goat*: called *duya* a beast; it refers to an 'offering', or 'hunting', or 'direction'.
19. *Three cocks' feet and one hen's foot* (*Noa'karega*): 'a spirit wants a fowl'.
20. *Legs of a guinea-fowl* (*Kon'kalse*): as above.
21. *Shell of a moya* (*water turtle*): 'good fortune'.
22. *A round disk-shaped ornament*, worn on the forehead by Kasena and Dagomba, called *na-zawena*; indicates 'Yini'.
23. *A bunch of cowries*, called *nin-bisiga* literally 'seeing'; 'you will see something good or bad.'
24. *Bobbin of a cotton reel and an old wooden whistle*: either refers to a sacred grove; or to a *bagere* (shrine).

<sup>1</sup> *Borassus flabellifer*?

25. *A miniature salt bag*, called *pimpea*: means 'sweetness'.

26. *Seed of a tree called sunsobrega*: signifies 'a full belly'.

27. *Seed of a tree called kinkagregu*: signifies 'a hard matter, the grinding of teeth.'

28. *A leather bangle*, stuffed with silk cotton, used to protect the wrist from the bow-string when firing arrows; called *polle*: signifies 'war', 'quarrelling'.

29. *A bundle of arrow shafts (mmoa)*: these appear to have a great variety of meanings, e.g. 'a woman's mat', 'a snake bite', 'a corpse', 'arrow wounds', 'a male child' (in cases of conception).

30. *Seed of shea butter (taya yofo)*: signifies 'fat', 'plenty'.

31. *A bundle of little sticks*, some with cowries attached to them, called simply 'the soothsayer's sticks', stated to have been presented by persons who had consulted and found that what was told them was correct; in the present context, it is said to signify 'roots'.

32. *A piece of grass tied in a knot*, called *kuenka*. This is kept and used to fumigate the bag and its contents from time to time, 'to drive away any spirits of the dead which may have come into the bag'.

The above completes the list of contents of this particular soothsayer's bag. The wand, which is held loosely by the soothsayer with the hand of the consultant also upon it, moves about among these articles and touches one after another. The consultant reads from these the answer to the question which he carries in his own head. In some cases, the soothsayer alone holds the wand, but from time to time passes this over the arms of the consultant, or touches the latter's lips or breast with it; both methods are equally commonly employed. A soothsayer who has lost his reputation as an oracle, is known as 'a blind *bakologo*' (*ba'kol'foa*), or a *ba'kol'kumbugere*, a non-consulting *bakologo*.

*A Séance*: The consultant squats before the *baga* and says: 'I hold your waist, leaving your mouth free; speak, even if it be cruel; do not have pity; drag me among stones, not in a smooth place; relate actual facts, do not say that it is like this and that, tell me the real thing.'

The *baga* picks up the two flat stones from among the contents of his bag, licks one side of each, and casts them on the ground saying: 'Father, here is a path.' (He sees from how they fall, if the spirit is willing to be consulted); he then continues, 'Get the wand; my father, after day breaks, I cannot know what is going to happen; I do not know what they (consultants) come for, you will tell them.' He then begins to rattle and sing in a droning voice:

*Nweyomm, nweyomm* (hit straight, hit straight).

The consultant again addresses him by name saying, 'Abaga'.

*Abaga* (the soothsayer) answers in a sing-song:

'Call my father and his mother.'

*Consultant*: 'May I call your father and your mother?'

*Abaga*: 'My father, have you heard the rattle crying? if you have heard, call your mother and you two meet together; since daybreak I am sitting in vain; you know, speak and give them.'

*Consultant*: 'Do you then consent that I may consult; that I may see it, or not see it, that you will tell me, or not tell me?'

*Abaga*: 'Yes, call my father; yes, call my mother; they will speak.'

*Consultant*: 'Then I hold you.'

The wand then hovers over all the *yala* which have been scattered on the ground at their feet, touching and retouching first one, then another, interspersed with occasional exclamations, such as, 'He consents, he consents'; 'What more?'; 'Nothing'; 'Have I made a mistake?'; 'No! No!'; 'See! a foot'; 'It sweetens with a beast', and so on.

A description of how a new soothsaying shrine is made, has already been given (see Chapter XV).

If a man has in his possession an ordinary *bagere*, i.e. ancestral shrine, and later the spirit or spirits in this express a desire to become consulting spirits under the same owner, then it would appear that the original *bagere* shrine must be broken down and rebuilt. The new shrine would then seem to be *bagere* and *bakologo* shrine in one, and is so treated as the occasion demands. I am not, however, perfectly certain about this point.

'Spirits belonging to different sides of the house may not be mixed up in a single *bakologo* shrine, they must be in the same *tumsum* (line).'

The breaking down of a *bakologo* shrine on the death of its custodian has already been described.



THE NANKANSE (*continued*)*Ceremonies at the Sacred Grove in Connexion with Sowing and Harvest*

**SIG'SA** *burega kom*<sup>1</sup> (The offering of 'water' before the sowing, after the first of the rains): 'As soon as the first rains (*sig'sa*) fall, the three Elders of my section (*yi-zuo*) meet at my compound, each bringing a small calabash of flour, which had been made by grinding some of the seed they are about to sow. If the first rains fall during the night, they come early on the next morning. They will ask me if I think the sowing ought to be begun. We then all set out for the *tengane* of *Anudi* (sacred grove). When we arrive there, the flour is mixed with water, being stirred with my forefinger.

'There is a small hole at the root of a tree in the grove, and I scrape out some of the earth and sit down crossing my feet [a sign of respect], I am naked except for a covering round my loins. I take a calabash of the flour-water and pour it into the hole saying, "They have ground this flour, and they have come, saying that they ask for things. Seek things from God (*Yini*) and bring them here to give them; drink this 'water' and let it be cool for you that you may seek things in plenty from God above. Let the early millet flourish in their farms, that the women and children may eat. If the crops are not good, and the women and children do not eat, they will scatter and leave me alone." The Elders then thank me saying, "Thanks, thanks, for your well doing." I then say to the rest, "Go home and may you only have to sow once." We return home, and when I reach my compound, I give to my father saying: "My father and my mother, I have given *Yaba* (ancestor) water; you two reach this water and walk together and go where God is (lit. go in God) and bring this early millet and permit the women and children to eat or else they will disperse and leave me."

'I then pour the offering over the *bagere* (shrine) and every one also drinks some; no one may refuse it.

'When the early millet is ripe, the three Elders who attended the first ceremony each take two stalks of millet from their farms, strip the grain, dry it and grind it<sup>2</sup> and bring it to me, and we go with it to the

<sup>1</sup> A similar ceremony as witnessed by me is described on p. 320.

<sup>2</sup> The women do this.

grove. Here I sit down as before, and pour out the flour-water, saying: "Ancestor, stand beside your trees, and receive this new early millet-water. Because we approached you before, the sowing was a (good) sowing; the *nara* became ripe and we are about to eat it; receive it and eat first, before we know to cut it, and the women and children eat it. Do not permit headache and belly-ache to lie within it and may I see sleep among the huts, and may marriages, and births, and rearing of animals prosper among the compounds."

'Each Elder, when he arrives home, will perform a similar ceremony over his own shrine, saying: "Our ancestor has received, now I give to you and your wife, permit us to make the harvest."

'The beer made from the early millet is also offered at the grove, the following words being addressed to the spirit. "Ancestor receive this *nara* beer; the early millet harvest is now over; we are about to make the third hoeing<sup>1</sup>; look after us in the approaching season of plenty, that we may not experience belly-ache or headache and that the children may not have to lay down a hoe (owing to illness) and it become rusty, and may guinea worm not catch them, and may they not shake a foot" (i.e. be bitten by a snake).

When the corn<sup>2</sup> is ripe, the ancestor's permission is not asked to harvest it. Beer made from it is, however, given at the grove with the words, "Thanks, thanks, thanks, for your well-doing, accept this corn and beer, and permit us now to clean up the farms."

Every one now, according to his means, will bring a sheep, goat, or fowl, which is sacrificed at the grove. The Head of the section (*yi-zuo-kyema*) will give his offering first. If it is a fowl, the wings are folded back with the head between them, and he sits down as described and says: "Ancestor, receive a fowl, and now let the people sleep; guard them, that I may not see headache in the compounds. Climb up to God and seek grain and things; all things are in God, seek them for us. Here are the offerings of So-and-so and So-and-so, receive this beer and drink, and permit them to sleep soundly in their houses."

'The flesh of the various sacrifices is cooked on a fire kindled with a flint and steel in the grove and the liver and a piece of meat off each leg are placed in the hole at the foot of the tree. The remainder of the food is eaten by those present. Women do not attend the ceremony; "if a woman knows your secrets, one day she will kill you."

<sup>1</sup> There are three hoeings, called *doa*, *tulega*, and *saama*.

<sup>2</sup> The following are the names of the various crops: *nara*, early millet; *zare*, a late millet *kyi*, guinea-corn; *kye molega*, red guinea-corn; *kamena* indian corn.

'These ceremonies are section ceremonies, performed independently by each section, at its own particular grove. They do not concern the *Ten'dana*, who will, however, officiate at any festival in which all the sections unite, e.g. at the *Ten'gana tigeria* or *waa* (a dance).'

*The Earth Goddess:* '*Ten'gono* (the Earth) is the wife of *Yini* (the Sky-God). The trees in a sacred grove are the sons of the Earth. The rain falls; the trees grow. The trees are children of the Earth and of *Yini*. Anywhere you see a cluster of trees, that is a *tengani*, but not single trees. There are people who give offerings to single trees, which have become their *Yini*. A soothsayer will let a man know when to respect a certain tree. The Earth is powerful; we give her offerings to mount up and give to her husband. This is done by the *Ten'dana*; he is like the *posigera*<sup>1</sup> in a marriage.'

*A Ceremony attended on 18 March 1928, in Connexion with the First Sowing, at the Grove of Anudi:* We all met under a big baobab tree (*toa*), about ten yards from the sacred grove. This *toa* tree, was, I was informed, a tree shrine (possibly *segere*? but I did not know anything about these guardian spirits at that time) of Akumie, who was a son of Anudi. Here Aboya was made to undress, as persons attending this ceremony are required to go naked. I received a special dispensation. The Head of the section had four calabashes of *nara zom* (early millet-flour) and one calabash of water, and one empty calabash. There was also a sheep and fowl presented by myself and a fowl given by Abasia, the Head of the section. We now all walked over to the sacred grove, which consisted of a clump of three *gyea* trees. The ground all round the roots was swept with the hands, and we all sat down cross-legged. Apeme, one of the Elders, took a pinch of flour out of each calabash and put this in the empty calabash; water was added and the calabash was handed to Abasia. A stone was lifted up, which revealed a small hole between the roots of the three trees, and Abasia sat down in front of this, holding the calabash in both hands. Apeme then spoke as follows, each sentence, or sometimes only the last words, being repeated by Abasia.

'Ancestor Anudi, each living thing is holding forth its hands waiting for the sowing. The rain has fallen and fallen again, but not very much. The whole land is hungry. Fire is devouring the land. Some have sown, others have not sown, for lack of rain. This, our master (referring to myself) followed by your "son" Aboya reached here. He wishes to know our *yela* (customs). He had asked, when the rain should

<sup>1</sup> See p. 152.

fall, what we would do. He said that when the rain should fall and we sacrifice, that he too would like to see. The rain in fact came and fell the same day. Next morning it came again. Some (i.e. some sections) have sown, but others have not. Receive "water" and a fowl. Do not let the millet seed (*nate*) remain in its holes (let it sprout). Let the sowing only have to be done once, because we have no food. When they cook soup, let it turn solid, like shea butter, and do not let us hear of headache and belly-ache on the part of the women and children. Do not let a child lay down a hoe (owing to sickness). Let the early millet come and let us be satisfied with food and grain, and the land become good. Accept this millet-water and drink it with the fowl and keep all people from the wet season until the dry season. Do not let the rains delay in coming; let the next rain come soon and the sowing be done quickly. *I'aba* (ancestor) Anudi, your child Aboya is also here; he was absent long; he went and lived among the Europeans<sup>1</sup> and they (his people) were always searching and searching until they found and brought him back home. But even then, the Europeans, who liked him, refused to let him go, and one day they called him again.<sup>2</sup> He knows all towns, yet he prefers your town (*teya*). He gave us a coin to buy a fowl; I too brought a fowl. See! a sheep also is here brought by his "father," (i.e. myself). He says he will remain long with us. Keep him; don't let him have head-ache, or belly-ache. Don't let him rise up some day so that it pains him somewhere. Receive it (the fowl) and reach to where your father is, and let him reach his father, and you all reach Atonaba and Tusegogunwa. All of you look after this European; let him not fail to attend his work any day because of headache and belly-ache or any part of his body paining him; that he may stay in this place and see only sweetness.'

He then poured the flour-water from the calabash into the hole. Next he took up the fowl, folded back the wings with the head between them, and cut its throat, letting the blood fall into the hole, at the same time plucking off some of the feathers on the back and putting them also in the hole, saying: 'Receive your fowl.' He then took the fowl which I had given and sacrificed it in the same manner saying: 'Here is the white man's fowl; let him sleep well, keep him well.' Meanwhile some young boys were kindling a fire. The sheep was now dragged forward, its legs held and snout seized to prevent it crying out; the rope round its neck was removed; its throat was cut, and the blood caught in a calabash which was passed to Abasia who poured

<sup>1</sup> See p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to Aboya entering my service.

some of it into the hole, saying: 'Receive your sheep; your son Aboya and his "father" gave it you; keep them, let them sleep a good sleep.' The skin was removed from the carcass like a bag. The meat was cut into six pieces—four legs, loins, and ribs—and put inside the skin, which was then hung up on the tree above the hole "that the spirit might receive the meat." The liver, a piece off the neck, a piece of flesh off a hind leg and off the legs of each fowl were roasted along with the two fowls. The stomach of the sheep was tied up with the intestines. Some of the roasted offerings were then placed in the hole, and the remainder was partaken of by those present. The skin was now taken off the branch where it was hanging and the meat inside divided out among us all. The skin, stomach, intestines, blood, and head, were given to Abasia, ribs to Atinbea (one of the Elders), loins to Ayine, a foreleg to Aboba, a foreleg to Aganba, a hind leg to me, a hind leg to Aboya.

It may be noted that before this ceremony was performed, some of the young people had already begun to sow. 'They are only children and it does not matter; just as when the millet is ripe, some boys will eat it before the *nara pala kom* (new early-millet-water); they will be punished by having pains in their belly. An old man would not dare to do either of these things; if he did so, he would die. People would abuse him; he would not be otherwise punished, the spirits would see to it.'

*The Ceremony of Tingana (The Groves):* The *Tingana*, or *W'aa*, as it is sometimes called, the latter word meaning possibly just 'the dance,' is a great annual festival held in the month of October 'in order that the land may be good.'

Among the Talense it is known under the title of Bug'ram which gives its name to the month (October) in which it is held. There can, I think, be little doubt that it is similar, except in name, to the *Odwira*<sup>1</sup> ceremony in Ashanti. *Tingana*, in this context, must not be confused with the *tingana* (groves) of the Ancestral Spirits of the various kindred-groups, in connexion with which the ceremonies already described have been held. In this case, the *Tingana* are the groves of the 'land-stones' and are in charge of the *Ten'dana*, not of the various section-heads. I have not been able myself to attend this ceremony, but the following account is from a trustworthy source.

'At the beginning of the month of Bug'ram, the Sia people (the Talense) begin their ceremony of Bug'ram. Fifteen days later, the

<sup>1</sup> See *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, Chapter XII.

people of Winkonjo begin their ceremony called *Tingana* (the groves)

Each section has already given the Chief (i.e. the Territorial Ruler) one basket of early millet (immediately after the harvest), and with this he has prepared *kya* (for making beer). Nine days after the new moon the *Ten'dana* and section-heads went to the Chief's compound in the morning with a soothsayer. He bade the consultant (*bugera*) seize the wand. The consultant had done so saying:

"Soothsayer."

The soothsayer had replied, "Call my mother."

The consultant replied, "I want you."

The soothsayer: "On account of the *Tingana* you will call me?"

Consultant: "Yes, I wish to sacrifice to the *Tingana*, but I do not know what to do."

Soothsayer: "Tell the Chief to give his *yaba* (ancestor) water, and also the Chief's horn,<sup>1</sup> before they set the pot" (of beer).

Consultant: "What girl will set the pot?"

Soothsayer (after consulting): "So-and-so."

The consultant will turn to one of the Elders and inquire if he has heard what the soothsayer has just said; the Elder will in turn ask the Chief. A big calabash of flour-water is provided by the Chief and every one will drink, including the soothsayer.

Ten days after the new moon, the women collect firewood and take it to the Chief's compound. On the eleventh day the women in the Chief's compound, begin to brew the beer, and on the twelfth, each compound will begin to make its own. On the fourteenth day, the *Ten'dana* and Elders take a fowl and guinea-fowls and assemble at the Chief's compound in the morning.

The Chief takes some beer and adds flour and pours this over his *nam doyo* (Chieftainship-horn) saying: "My father, you have given me this task (*yele*), reach the Chieftainship-horn that it may receive a fowl and a guinea-fowl, and beer, and go with us to the groves and let them receive theirs; join with them and rise up to God (*Yini*) and ask for new corn (next season); this dry season let 'the horn' join with the land to guard the people." He then sacrifices a fowl, and a guinea-fowl, cutting their throats, and letting the blood fall on the horn and he plucks some feathers and sticks them upon it.

The *Ten'dana* and Elders now all rise up, accompanied by a representative of the Chief and set out to the *Tey'kugri* (land stones). The

<sup>1</sup> See p. 309.

order in which the groves are visited is as follows: Aburuwa, Ayenyuma, Anagabea, Asembloe, Atanpinpelego, Aponaba, and Asakana. The *Ten'dana* speaks as follows: "Aburuwa, rise up and receive; here is your *nara's* beer; protect the *teya*,<sup>1</sup> so that I may not see belly-ache, and headache in young boy or girl, man or woman. There now remains the hunting season; help them in the long grass and let them kill beasts."

'A fowl and guinea-fowl are sacrificed at each grove, and roasted, and the liver and a piece of meat off each leg is placed on the stone. The remainder of the offerings is put in a bag and is eaten at the Chief's house where everyone reassembles and reports to the Chief, who gives them flour-water.

'Next day is the fifteenth of the new moon. Every one who has a *bagere* (shrine) of any kind, *sa*, *ma*, *yaba*, *Yini*, *segere*, *bakologo* or *tiim bagere*<sup>2</sup> renews the "roots"<sup>3</sup> pertaining to these. When a fowl is offered to a *tiim bagere*, it is not killed. The shrine is told, "*ku noa*" (kill the fowl) when the fowl will die. Every *tiim bagere* has a pot, and the whole family in the compound bathe with water from this. That same evening, every one goes to the Chief's compound, and they begin to dance the *yoyo* dance which lasts three nights. Strangers come from different towns; that is how we get new wives and how our daughters find husbands.

'After the men have danced for three nights, with the women looking on, the women dance and the men look on. After the *Yoyo* dance is over, hunting begins.'

<sup>1</sup> See p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> A fetish.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 305.

THE NANKANSE (*continued*)*Building<sup>1</sup> a Home for a Spirit (Kyima mea)*

SHRINES which are the potential abodes of ancestral spirits may vary in form and size, just as, during life time, a man may live in a large or in a small house. The spirit itself may, indeed, have a shrine and yet, as it were, be without a proper habitation. The actual spirit is in (or 'is') the axe, bangle, &c.—generally some metal object—the conical clay mounds into which such objects are built are regarded rather as the 'compound' or 'quarters' in which the spirit may wander in greater ease and comfort. The following ceremony describes why and how larger quarters were built for a father's spirit by his son.

A man called Aganda (literally, Male Scorpion) had died about ten years before, leaving several sons. Since the father's death, his eldest son, called Anereba, had been in the habit of sacrificing to his father's spirit on a small conical *bagere* just outside his compound. Troubles came upon the family, sickness, lack of wives and children, so Anereba consulted the soothsayer and was told that, as he had thrown over (*lobe base*) his father by never having built his spirit a suitable abode, he would never prosper. Anereba therefore decided to erect a new *bagere*. He made all arrangements with his brothers and his sister's sons. Flour was ground and *kya* prepared, and all the relations brought gifts for sacrifice. A new *bagere* was built by a man who was chosen by the spirit to do so. This new *bagere* had been built towards the end of the previous harvest, but had not as yet been consecrated, save for an offering of flour-water which had been poured upon it with the words, 'Receive water, a pot has been "set" on the fire (i.e. beer is being prepared) do not let it spoil.'

The evening of the 24th of March 1928 was chosen for the final ceremony, and we all assembled beside the new shrine (see Fig. 36). The following persons brought gifts:

1. Anereba himself; a sheep, a fowl, and a guinea-fowl, and a calabash of flour-water.
2. Asa, a younger brother of Anereba; a fowl, a guinea-fowl, and flour-water.

<sup>1</sup> Ceremony attended on 24 March 1928.



3. Asabia, Akanyareba, and Azibere, half-brothers of Anereba; each a fowl and flour-water.

4. Tabia, a sister's son; he gave a very small chicken, at which, when it was being sacrificed, every one laughed.

5. Aurugu (lit. Corn-husks), Aganda's brother's son; a fowl and flour.

6. Adono, a great friend of Aganda's and *aseba*<sup>1</sup> to Anereba; a fowl and flour-water.

7. Anyoyema, Aganda's brother's son; a fowl and a guinea-fowl.

8. Aganda's sister's son; a fowl and flour.

9. Abelenyini, Aganda's daughter's son. (This boy, see Fig. 37, was badly disfigured by tattoo marks which, in the cutting, had become poisoned and had become large keloids.) He brought a fowl. This concluded the list of donors and their offerings.

The ceremony opened by a half-brother of Anereba, who spoke as follows: 'He said they must give him a house; this land is burning; he must cause the people in this house to climb a hill (i.e. take them out of danger); he possesses this whole house, and must remove headache and belly-ache. Receive for him.'

Anereba then said: 'My mother' (really his father's mother whom he is addressing), 'you said you do not want anything; you do not want beer, you do not want fowls; you want only a "roor" (this means that her spirit had expressed the wish to become a *bakologo* spirit); receive water then, let "sleeping sleep" in the house.'

This offering was made upon the smaller mound c (see Fig. 40) and implies that this mound will later be raised and become a *bakologo*.

Anereba next came forward and placed both his hands upon the new shrine (see Fig. 38) and spoke as follows: 'My father, Aganda, Aguresa walked, swaggering with a cow tail, in order to get a wife, and you followed behind. This house is suffering from sleep torn asunder; see this fire has caught the land; it is devouring it; you refuse to wait; you demand quarters (*deo*). A woman fetched water (to mix the clay) and they built you a house; this woman is no longer here; they have taken her away because we were too poor to give the *sulle* (bride-price). Grant that she may return. I know that you will look after this house. I am an egg, but not its seed (i.e. not a hatched-out chicken). You will know how to keep this house. If I say I am going in search of corn, let me stumble with a good foot, and meet with him who possesses corn.

<sup>1</sup> As we have already seen, *aseba* refers not only to the maternal uncle, but is a courtesy title for males from a man's mother's brother's town.



FIG. 36. 'We all assembled beside the new shrine'



FIG. 37. 'This boy was badly disfigured'

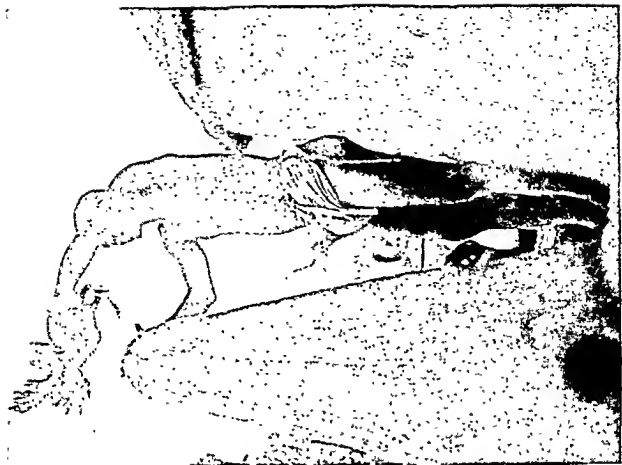


FIG. 39. 'He sacrificed the fowl'



FIG. 38. '... placed both his hands upon the new shrine'

Accept beer, you, and all your people and receive your fowls and your beast standing there. If you are prepared to join with Aguresa and Anyanyereba and look after this house during this fire, then accept this, my fowl, and let it thank God.<sup>1</sup>

He sacrificed the fowl (see Fig. 39); it fell on its back. Asa now came forward with his offering which he gave to Anereba, who spoke as follows: 'Receive this, Asa's, fowl. I have already said that a woman fetched water and they built for you. Asa has a stout heart,<sup>2</sup> if he had not, he could not give a fowl. How can you permit that a woman should fetch water for building for you, and yet allow them to take her away, before she could see this sacrifice? Receive this fowl.'

Other offerings quickly followed. Adono's fowl was given with the words, 'My father, Aganda, receive also your friend Adono's fowl; you and he followed each other, and you melted into oil<sup>3</sup> and descended into the ground, and only he remained. He has said that they cannot give you a room without his giving you a fowl. From the day you died, Adono has taken care of me until to-day. He gave me a tobacco farm. This tobacco has helped me to remain alive. Receive then his fowl.'

Tabia's offering was given to the accompaniment of the following words: 'Aganda, here is the fowl of your sister's son. Receive it. You cleared the ground and built a house for him; it is only a poor house; he cannot maintain life in it; there are no fowls in it; there are no guinea-fowls in it, much less a wife and child; you cleared the ground, and it is a poverty-stricken house, so he brings this fowl; it is a miserable fowl, see how small it is.' Aurugu's offering was given, and the following words spoken: 'Accept this fowl of Aurugu. You found a wife for him, and he has a child. On account of this I went and told him (about this ceremony being about to be held) and he has brought this fowl for me to give you.'<sup>4</sup>

The remainder of the speeches do not call for any special notice.

A piece of the liver of every sacrifice was placed on the *bagere* and feathers were plastered upon it with blood. The new *bagere* may be seen with other shrines in Figs. 36, 38, and 39. Fig. 41 shows Aganda's wife with her grandson.

<sup>1</sup> Fall upon its back.

<sup>2</sup> It was his wife who had run away.

<sup>3</sup> The *sia* (soul) is always thought of as melting on death.

<sup>4</sup> I was later informed that Aurugu had a wife from Orogo, who ran away from him but was brought back by the help of Aganda. She conceived, and eventually bore a child. Her husband is thanking the spirit for his assistance in the matter.

The following drawing (see Fig. 40) shows in greater detail than the photographs the various shrines which stood beside the new 'room'.

A is the new *deo-bagere*, in honour of which, the ceremony was held. B is called *Anereba yaba deo*, and is the *bagere* of Aganda's father Anyanyereba.

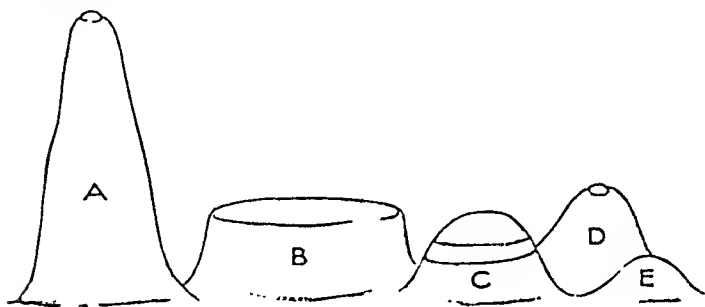


FIG. 40

c is the *bagere* of Agana (who was mother of Aganda's father); it will later become a soothsayer's shrine, as is already indicated by the lines circling it. It is at present in the *vilego* stage (see p. 218), d and e are really part of c; d contains a cup with a lid and is known as *bugere* and is very often found associated with *bakologo*. c is called *bakologo doko* (the *bakologo* pot). The whole c, d, and e are in connexion with the spirit of Agana, who was the mother of Anyanyereba and great-great-grandmother of Anereba, the present head (*Yi-dana*) of the compound.



FIG. 41. Aganda's wife with her grandson

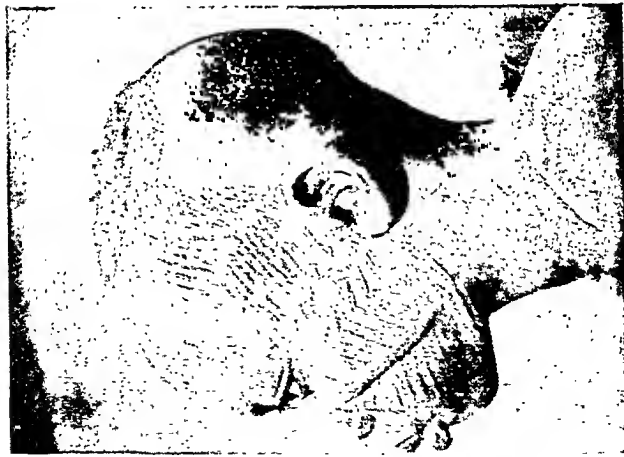


FIG. 42. Showing Nankanse markings

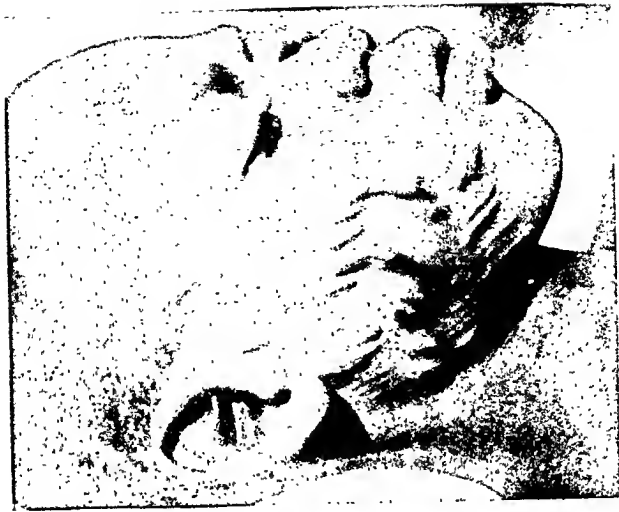


FIG. 43. Keloids formed by poisoning of tattoo cuts

THE NANKANSE (*continued*)

*Some Miscellaneous Notes on Tattooing. Ornaments. Dress. Weapons and Agricultural Implements. The Calendar. The Heavenly Bodies. Personal Names. Privileged Familiarity. The Day's Work*

WHATEVER may once have been the value of tribal marks as a means of distinguishing tribes or clans, tattooing, with certain exceptions, is now a somewhat uncertain criterion by which to judge such matters. The main cause of this lies, perhaps, at the door of the slave raiders who swept over a large area of the Northern Territories in the latter part of the last century. Kazare, the father of the better-known Babatu, and their henchmen, Ali Mori, Izaka, Baheri-Bisibisi and others, round whom so many of the clans rallied perforce in order to save their own lives, were accustomed to mark their followers and captives with their own particular tribal (Zabarma) marks. Yet again, among many tribes, purely fanciful tattooing is often in vogue, marks having an aesthetic rather than a clan or tribal significance. The Nankanse are, however, an exception to this general principle, and seem to possess a distinctive tattooing which will now be described.

The marking is performed about the age of three, and is done by a person whose profession this work is; his title is the *zayenwata*, or cutter-of-cheeks. This person may be of either sex. The fee is generally a fowl, some shea butter nuts, or two hundred cowries. Before the operation is performed, the child's *segere* (guardian spirit) is informed and flour and water given to it to the accompaniment of the following words:

'Rise up and receive your fowl and flour-water; we say we are about to cut your ward's cheeks; let him sleep, and not suffer from headache and belly-ache.'<sup>1</sup> A child is



<sup>1</sup> 'Sometimes a child's *segere* forbids it to be tattooed.'



marked with its father's, not its mother's marks, but generally the youngest and supposed last child to be born is given its mother's marks (if her clan have any).

'All Gurense have the same marks,' said my informant, including in this term, the Talense, Namnam, Kasena, Builsa, and Kusase. He further specified the following towns in detail: Baluŋa, Arba, Zuaruŋo, Yorogo, Boŋo, Namogo, Zeko, Zoko, Sumburuŋo, Serego, Bolega, Kalebeo, Kologo, Naga, Kandega, Mirebu, Nyutuguŋu, Tangosogo, Po'mologo-serego. Those from Kologo, Naga, Kandega, Mirebu, Tangosogo, Po'mologo-serego, in addition to Nankanse marks, to be described presently, have six cuts spreading from the eye to the ear, thus, on each side of the face. As seen in the sketch on the previous page.

Figs. 42 and 43 illustrate clearly the details of Nankanse tattooing, and incidentally prove that what I have seen stated, i.e. 'that markings do not come out in a photograph', to be erroneous. Fig. 43 is particularly interesting as it illustrates a case where 'something has gone wrong'; the raised keloids are a quite unintentional result; the pain the patient must have suffered from these septic wounds may readily be imagined. The leaf-shaped cuts, which may be seen in the illustration, are called *No-dovia*. *Dovia* is the name for the leaf of the *dawa dawa* tree. The long cut from the nose down the cheek, is called *Bene* or *Tampole*; it is sometimes on one side only, sometimes on both sides of the face.

Both sexes tattoo. The following account of the process of tattooing was given me by a woman called Anyuregaria (lit. Name-well-known).



FIG. 44

Her stock-in-trade consisted of an old rusty knife (see Fig. 44), some charcoal made of the roots of a tree called *petere*, which she

called *Taya-nwata-barega-bugum-sane*.

'Before I begin work,' she said, 'I give my brother flour-water and ask him to give our mother's mother (a spirit), and he does so, saying for me: "Receive water and drink. When I cut a child, let it straighten itself; do not let the child die, and let me enjoy a good head and return here, and when I return, and all is well (lit. sweet), I will give you a fowl."'

'After making the cuts, I rub in powdered charcoal, wash with cold water, to stop the bleeding, then rub in *taya* or *nyune* seed fat. After three days, the oil is removed and the scars plastered with clay (*gygero*). A successful tattooing does not leave scars; that is *balogero* (ugly).



FIG. 45. Showing straw lip ornament

Some people die, but I have never lost any one. If a patient dies, they "set a pot" (*dogele*). (She means she would then have *tobega*. Shedding blood in tattooing does not necessitate any purification of the land.)

**Ornaments:** The Nankanse women pierce the upper and lower lips and insert a blade of grass called *nore-mia*. See Fig. 45. Sometimes bone or antelope horn substitutes are used instead of these stalks; these are called by the same name, though not now of the material specified. (The Isala have the same custom, calling the ornaments *ni-tavai* (pl. *ni-tavea*, lit. mouth stones). Fig. 46 illustrates these:

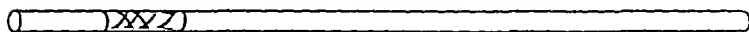


FIG. 46

The ears are also pierced and *tobere misi*, 'ear straws' inserted; again, white pebbles are sometimes substituted (Isala *deya-taveri*) (see Fig. 47). Flat bangles are worn, made out of the shoulder-blades of an elephant. (See Fig. 48.) These are called *kaka* (pl. *kagase*) in Nankanse (*Sake-bi* in Isal). They are also made in wood, clay, ivory, and

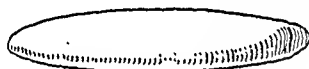


FIG. 47

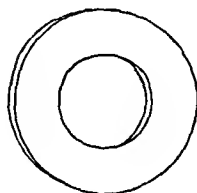


FIG. 48

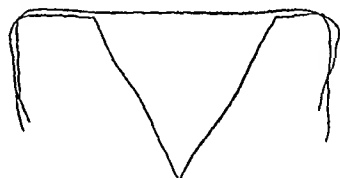


FIG. 49

bone. Brass anklets are also worn, but I omitted to record the special name for these.

**Deformation of the Teeth:** The following tribes file the teeth to a point: Nankanse, Kasena, Talense, Bulse, Namnam, Kusase, Konkomba, Bimoba, Isala, Dagari, Wala, and Lobi.

**Dress:** *Seyele voro* (the wearing of leaves.) Leaves are worn by women only, men go naked, or wear a skin, or, on special occasions, a loincloth which is shaped like a triangle as seen in Fig. 49. This is worn either

hanging down or tucked into the string behind. Young boys and girls go about quite naked and the latter, even after reaching puberty, often do not trouble very much about 'clothes', and walk about quite nude without a vestige of self-consciousness. Women who have not yet borne any children, if they wear leaves at all, will do so only at the back, but after child-birth at the back and front. These leaves are really small forked branches, not single leaves. The branch is sus-

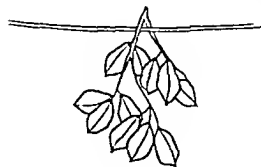


FIG. 50

pended across the string so habitually worn round the waist. (See Fig. 50.)

There are seven kinds of leaves worn by Nankanse women. These are known as *Kenkalega*, *kenkagerega*, *vo-kapela* (white leaves), *nya*, *sen-sabega* (worn the first day after delivery), *taya-pibere* (shea butter leaves, worn by widows) and *lure*.

As well as leaves, women wear various substitutes for them, e.g. small 'aprons' made of: (a) cotton-thread, (b) fibre (*bereya*), (c) grass (*visiga*), (d) leather, (e) fibre (*biru*).

(a) These coverings are known as *vo'neya*, lit. 'front leaves,' because they are, with the exception of (c and d), only worn in front. They are worn by women for the first time after the ash-blowing ceremony.

(b) *Fibre Coverings*: These are called *sea vo* (lit. waist leaves.) The fibre is dyed with *zinzirega* seeds. This covering is used during menstruation and after delivery. The fibre is made from *bereya* stalks. This covering is worn in front and passed behind between the legs.

(c) *Visiga*: Made of grass; worn only behind; a dress for special occasions, e.g. dances. Two of the wives of a Nankanse Chief may be seen wearing these in Fig. 51.

(d) *Leather Covering*: *Vo-goberego* (pl. *gobeto*) (lit. leather leaves) made of strands of woven leather and *visiga* grass. Worn behind, with real leaves, or a *vo neya*, in front; full dress for very special occasions.

(e) *Fibre (Biru vo)*: Made of *bereya* fibre, as is *sea vo*, but prepared by a different process; used by elderly women, but now going out of fashion. The most fashionable of the above are the *vo-gobeto*, the 'leather leaves.' They cost from 3s. to 4s. and formerly only the very wealthy could afford them.

Leaves are supposed to be worn only when green and fresh. '*Te fo voro*' (change your leaves) is a reproach. Young unmarried girls think it fashionable not to wear anything at all, or at most a very small spray.

Pubic hairs are much sought after and are oiled and combed. Men who wear a skin, generally hang it behind, not in front. 'If they wore it in front, women would suppose that they were circumcised and would laugh at them.' Very old men sometimes carry their penis in small bags, called *zanta liriga*.

*Weapons:* Bows and arrows, the latter poisoned and unpoisoned, are the weapons of war and of the chase (see Fig. 53.) The Nankanse bow

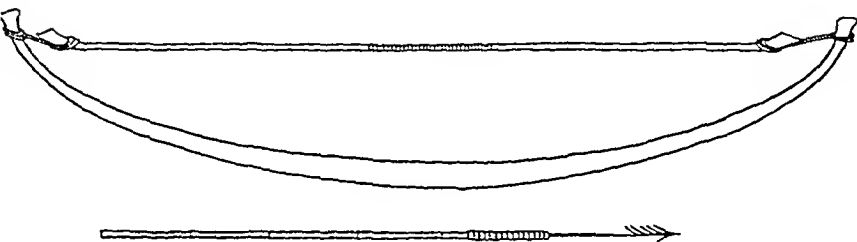


FIG. 53

(*tafo*, pl. *tini*) is made from a tree called *pulegu*. The bow 'string' is made out of a strip of bamboo and is called *meleyo*; it is bound round in the centre with *sebege* fibre made from the husk of the *dawa dawa*. This bow-string<sup>1</sup> is fastened to the bow by leather thongs (*gore*) in the manner illustrated, and is readily unstrung.

The arrows are barbed or plain, unfeathered and unnotched. The shaft is made out of a reed called *mote*. The arrow head is iron and goes down three or four inches inside the shaft, the socket being bound round with *sebege* fibre. Arrows are often carried in arm-quivers. See Fig. 7.

Axes, shaped as illustrated (see Fig. 54) are carried slung over the shoulder. Throwing sticks are also used, and slings (*kalobega*).<sup>2</sup>

*Agricultural Implements:* The Nankanse, Kasena, Talense, and Namnam use a common type of hoe which is as illustrated (see Fig. 54.) A long stick is also used for making holes in which to put the seed. The axe is used for clearing the farms.

*The Calendar:* So far as I could discover, there is a time division of a year (*yune*) which consists of twelve moons, the names for which will be given presently. This year is again divided into two periods, called *sio* and *une*; respectively the wet, and dry season. The month (*namboa*,

<sup>1</sup> Dagomba, Mossi, and Isala, use, I believe, a string bow-string.

<sup>2</sup> Also used by Builsa; called *visum* in Bulea.

moon) is, as far as I could ascertain, thirty days and is divided into two periods, i.e. *nambo' pelega* (white moon), and *nambo' lika*, or just *lika* (i.e. dark moon, or darkness.)

The *Ten'dana* keeps a string with thirty knots upon it, one of which he unties each day. I could not find any trace of a term for days of

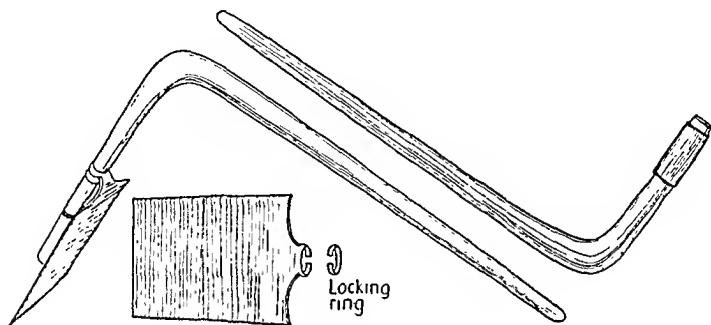


FIG. 54

the week, except among certain tribes, who call them after various market days, a subject to which I shall revert later.

The year begins, I think, in October. The months then are:

OCTOBER. *Bugadam-Bug'dam*, or *Bug'ram-Namboa*.

NOVEMBER. *Kyi*, or *Kye-Buni-Namboa*.

DECEMBER. *Koro-Namboa*.

JANUARY. *Gunfuku-Namboa* (blowing about of silk cotton moon.)

FEBRUARY. *Gologo-Namboa*.

MARCH. *Sebeda* (lit. male, i.e. 'first', important sowing.)

APRIL. *Seb'nyane* (lit. female, i.e. 'second' hoeing.)

MAY. *Na'doa* (lit. weeding of *nara*.)

JUNE. *Namboayo* (lit. useless month.)

JULY. *Nar'kyea-Namboa* (lit. harvest of early millet.)

AUGUST. *Daa-kom-Namboa*.

SEPTEMBER. *Daa*.

*Daa-Kom* (August), *Daa* (September), *Bugadam* (October), and *Gologo* (February), are the times for the important festivals, after which these months are named.

*Da-kom Bugram*, and *Gologo* will be discussed when I come to deal with a neighbouring tribe, the Talense, as these festivals appear to be organized by this tribe. The Nankanse equivalent of *Bugadam* or

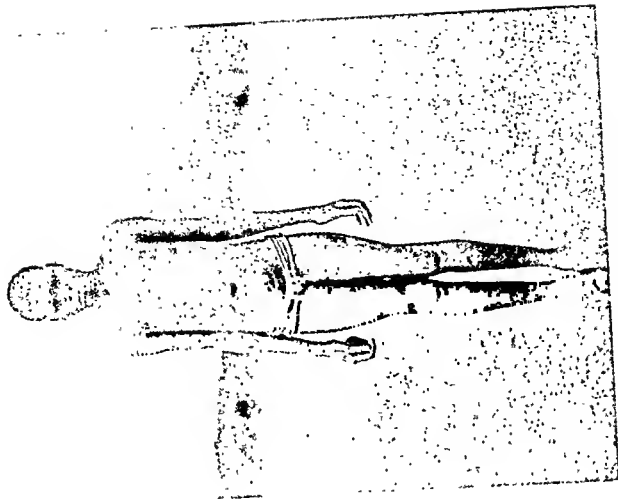


FIG. 56. A young girl



FIG. 55. A Winkonjo elder



FIG. 57. Aboya's wife

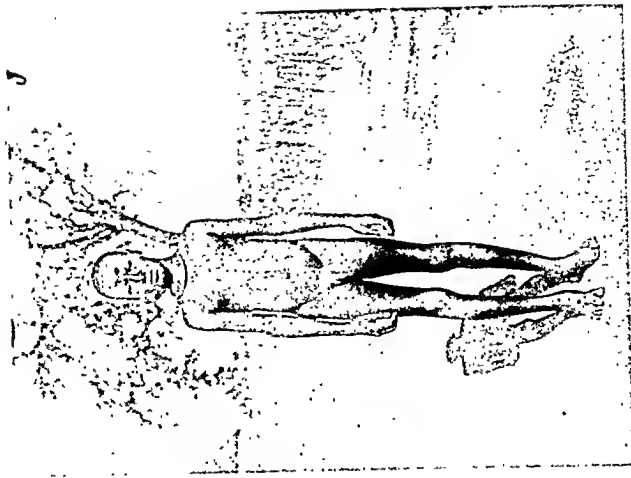


FIG. 58. A young boy of the Leopard and Fowl clan



*Bug'rari* appears to be the ceremony already described called *Tir-gana*—'the Groves'—which is held in the month of Bugram, i.e. October.

*The Heavenly Bodies:* The Sun itself is variously called *Wunteya* (lit. something the land feels) or *Wune*, *Tini*, but the latter more generally refers to the firmament and is also the name used for the Supreme Being. The Moon is *Namboa* or *Mwarega* and is a female, whose husband is God's son, the Sun. The Stars are known as 'children of the Moon' (*nware-bisi*.) *Sa*, rain, thunder, lightning, 'it is the voice of God'.

*The Rainbow* (*Gomatia taso*, lit. the Chameleon's bow); so called also by the Moshi.

*Eclipse of Moon:* 'The Sun swallows (*tole*) the Moon.'

*Comet* (Stars with tails, *nware-bisi-zure*): 'The land wishes to die; we consult the soothsayers and they tell us to what shrine we must sacrifice.'

*Personal Names:* The following is a short list of Nankanse names for males and females. Many names are possibly short phrases or sentences in which there is an ellipse.<sup>1</sup>

#### NAMES FOR MALES

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>
Anyulia.	Jealous.
Atonjo.	Wet-ball-of-clay.
Asare.	Satisfaction.
Atogesega.	The equivalent of the English, 'Copy-cat'.
Agwengwere.	Hyena.
Akampu.	Will-not-shave.
Asamane.	Farm-near-the-compound.
Azogoro.	Bad-grain.
Awane.	Calabash.
Atore.	Mortar.
Akantsake.	Will-not-consent.
Aberokyeku.	Wants-much.
Akoygoe.	Will-not-stop.
Adikse.	Eat-all-round.
Anusin.	In-the-hands.
Agana.	Chameleon.
Aganba.	More-than-they.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Ashanti 'Answer names'. See *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, p. 46 n.

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>
Asoŋa.	Hare.
Asigya.	Has-come-down.
Adabasi.	Finished-buying.
Augeboba.	Feed-them-for-another.

## NAMES FOR FEMALES

Atoyene.	Plain-speaking.
Aveabono.	Something-from-Vea (a town).
Abotarege.	Weary-of-giving.
Akyelezusa.	Still-begging.
Akumzaya.	My-death-is-far-distant.
Atasiŋa.	I-can-be-silent.
Amalagane.	More-beautiful.
Akansekeba.	Not-enough-for-them.
Anyetata.	Have-seen-someone-to-take-care-of-me.
Atoyedu.	Speak-respectfully.
Anasatoye-Yiŋa	A-poor-person-is-reprimanded-in-public.
Apure.	Flower.
Asababono.	Something-belonging-to-a-blacksmith.
Akumpase.	Cannot-attain.
Adoyeboba.	Give-birth-to-and-give-away.
Auneya.	Has-sat-on-egg.
Asombasine.	Beauty-in-vain.

Many of my informants expressed genuine fear at having their names written down and put in a book, and I have very little doubt, in many cases did not give their real names.

*Privileged Familiarity:* The privileged familiarity which exists between certain relations which has already been noted, extends even to certain tribes. It is found for example, between the Nankanse and the Dagomba and Moshi. The form this licence generally takes, is for a man on meeting any person belonging to one or other of these tribes—to whom he may be a perfect stranger—to report falsely some bad news, such for example as the death of his Chief, or a parent or friend (where such are known). The party on whom this kind of joke is perpetrated will know it is a hoax, and retaliate in like manner. Among near relatives this custom is practised, among others, between grandparents and their grand-children, on both father's and mother's side, and includes the following instances of familiarity.

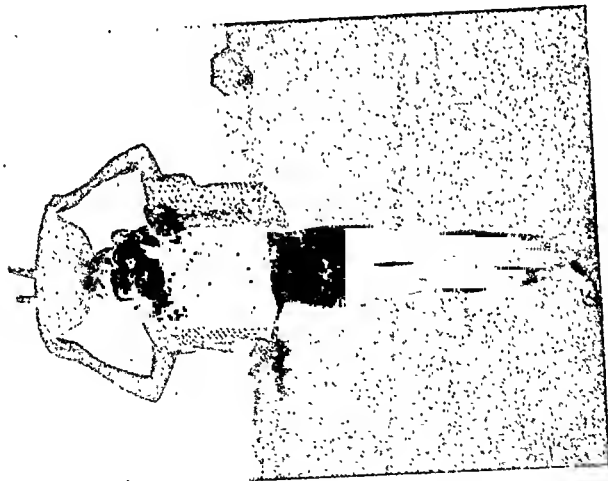


FIG. 59. Her first frock



FIG. 60. Victor Aboya's mother and the author  
at Winkonjo



FIG. 61. A blacksmith and his wife. Note his beard plaited to prevent it catching fire as he works

- (a) Jokingly enquiring of a grandparent when he or she intends<sup>1</sup> dying.
- (b) Reporting (falsely) that they are already dead.
- (c) Slapping, and playing practical jokes, e.g. pulling away seat from underneath a person, and such like.
- (d) Taking fowls and guinea-fowls and food without authority or asking.
- (e) Abusing and calling names.

Among the Isala, this familiarity is carried on even after death, the party who is privileged joking with the relatives of the deceased and saying that he has killed him. A grand-daughter will, at the funeral of her grandfather, dress up in his skin and cap and waist-cloth, and strut about laughing and joking. 'If she did not do so, she would dream.' Grand-children on the death of grandparents only shave one half of the head—among the Isala not at all; another form, perhaps, of familiarity. Other examples of this curious and interesting phenomenon will be noted from time to time.

*The Day's Work:* 'About cock crow, the man, or if he has sons, the youngest son, will get up and remove the logs which block up the entrance to the compound, leaving only one, to prevent the cattle from getting out. Helped possibly by a brother, he will then milk the cows into a calabash. The wives and daughters, meanwhile, sweep out the rooms and the yard, and are issued their grain rations for the day. They then go off to fetch water. The cattle are driven out to graze, in charge of the small boys. In the dry season, the owner of the compound with the elder boys and men will go to work in the tobacco field, taking with them some *zom*<sup>1</sup> in their leather bags. The women on returning from the water, will pound and grind the grain, boil water, put in the flour, adding cold water and more flour, until it becomes thick. This is *sayabo*.<sup>2</sup> This is served out to the men when they return from work. They will eat it sitting on the flat roofs. Men and women do not eat out of the same dish. The head of the compound may eat with his younger children, but never with his eldest son or eldest daughter. The women eat their food together in the *zin-zaka* (yard).<sup>3</sup>

'About an hour before sunset, the boys bring the cattle home. They milk them outside; this evening milking is the perquisite of these

<sup>1</sup> Grain, first boiled, then dried and roasted, ground, and mixed with shea butter.

<sup>2</sup> Porridge has three names, referring to stages in the making, i.e. *yulim*, *bere*, and finally *sayabo*.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 249.

young herdsmen. In the wet season the young fowls are always carried in baskets (*kuyonko*) to the farms, there to be fed on white ants. The sitting-place for the men is just outside the entrance of the compound<sup>1</sup> (*zenore*.) When the weather is hot, the whole family may sit on the flat roof and tell stories. In the dry season the men go hunting. The women make baskets *peo* (pl. *pito*), used for carrying corn, tobacco, pieces of ant-hill to feed the fowls, &c. These baskets, which one so often sees the Nankanse women wearing like hats on their heads, are made of *mia* (pl. *mise*) grass stalks. The men weave the baskets called *kenka* out of grain stalks, and the *kuyonto* baskets for carrying fowls. Among the Nankanse, only women make mats. (Among the Isala, men do so.) Women cook, plaster walls, beat floors, make shea butter, cook beer, sow, and collect the harvest after the men have cut down the stalks of grain, chase birds off the farms, spin cotton, plant the fibre used for making "front leaves" (*vo-neya*) and "back leaves" (*pore vo*.) They also collect the firewood. In the market, women sell corn, shea butter, ground-nuts, fowls, and corn cakes. Men sell goats, sheep, guinea-fowls, &c. Women also make brooms for sweeping and mesh *zaleya* nets. Men make fishing-nets. Women catch fish by "splashing" the pools dry (compare Ashanti); men catch fish in nets and basket fish-traps. Both men and women pound tobacco. The women smoke long pipes.' (See Fig. 52.) Some other Nankanse types are illustrated in Figs. 55-62.

<sup>1</sup> See Fig. 10.

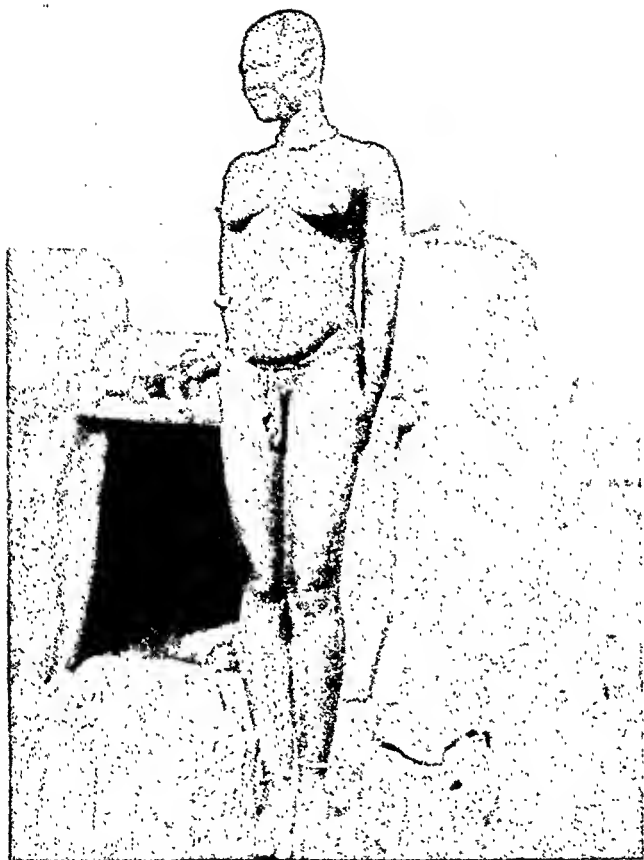


FIG. 62. The blacksmith's wife

## THE TALENSE

*History; Tribal, Clan, and Soog' Organization*

**I**NTRODUCTORY: The Talense occupy the area shown on the map. According to the 1921 census report they number 29,972 persons of both sexes. Specimens of the language, called Talene or Talen', have been given in Chapter III. Their appearance, their houses, customs, religion, and organization all seem to me to be very similar to those of their neighbours, the Nankanse. Their languages, too, are very much alike. Had the Talense not been labelled with a separate appellation, I doubt if the anthropologist—save after, perhaps, a very minute investigation—would have considered it necessary to deal with them as a group distinct from the Namnam and the Nankanse. Nevertheless, in accordance with the plan which I mapped out, I have done so. Rites and customs, already investigated, discussed, and described, are here approached from a different angle. Results so obtained are always valuable, even where there is a certain inevitable repetition. The process serves also to fill gaps in the work which has gone before, to which the information obtained later may be considered as supplementary.

In dealing with this and the remainder of the tribes, I have endeavoured to group my facts, as far as possible, under the chapter headings already adopted. This arrangement will enable my readers the more readily to piece together the sum total of the data available concerning any one particular subject, and I hope will mitigate somewhat the defects in presentation for which I have already apologized.

The history of the tribal wanderings of this people follows the same lines as that with which we are now familiar. This history is the record of the migrations, not of the tribe *qua* tribe, but of every clan, the composite of which now forms the group called the Talense (s. Talerja; language Talene.) The tribal histories, specimens of which are about to be related, tell of the migrations (within comparatively narrow limits of time and space) of the groups which have for some hundreds of years supplied the Territorial Rulers. Of the wanderings of the original people themselves, who are now largely merged with this foreign element, nothing is really known, except that they were undoubtedly of the stock which I have termed the 'Mole group', who seem to



have been the original inhabitants of these parts for a much longer period than can be claimed for their aristocracy.

The chief Talense 'towns', in the sense with which we are now familiar, are as follows: Tongo, Bade, Gorogo, Si, Winduri, Ten'zugu, Tilega, Yamdiga, Biun, Siega, Duse, Datoko, Gbee, Kpantia, Kpale, Wakyiga, Gbeogo, Zandoya, and Gbea. These settlements, including the subjects of the Chief of Kurugu, now constitute the Talense tribe.

*History of Tongo* (as told me by the present Chief, Kpama): 'We (i.e. his ancestors) came from Mampurugu, which we left owing to a quarrel between *Misore* and his younger brother—whose name we do not know—about the Chieftainship. *Misore* left Mampurugu in consequence and came first to Bongo, thence to Saamere; from there he passed through a dense bush and came to the hills. (The Tongo hills.) At the foot of these hills we found a people whom our ancestors called Gundugo or Talense. We intermarried with these people and have all become Talense. *Misore* died here; his grave is marked by a big baobab tree. He was succeeded by his son, *Sezene*, who, now that his father was dead, returned to Mampurugu<sup>1</sup> and received from the Chief the Chieftainship of Tongo. *Sezene* died, and was succeeded by his brother, *Nambogeda*, who also returned to Mampurugu to ask for the Chieftainship. He died, and was succeeded by his younger brother, *Boyayeret*, a son of *Sezene*. About this time, the Chief of Mampurugu made one of his son's Chief of Kurugu, and placed Tongo under Kurugu. *Boyayeret* was succeeded by his "brother" *Sapelele*, a son of *Sezene*, who reported to Kurugu and held his Chieftainship from that ruler. *Sapelele* was succeeded by his brother *Nodeyene* (lit. Short-fowl). *Nodeyene* was succeeded by his younger brother, *Lebsekora* (Old-things-change). He, in turn, was succeeded by *Kusii* (Worn-out-hoe), a son of *Boyayeret*. He was succeeded by *Bileu*, who was succeeded by *Lobsaab* (Throw-away-food), his brother, who, in turn, was succeeded by *Belersale*, his half-brother, who was succeeded by *Belersbo*, a son of *Kusii*. In his time a great famine came, and many people were sold (to the Dagomba). He was succeeded by *Kabu*, a son of *Lobsaab*. *Lobsaab* was succeeded by *Sapelega* (White-clouds), a half-brother of *Kabu*. *Sapelega* was succeeded by *Kakora*, a son of *Bileu*. He was followed by *Nekay*, a son of *Kusii*; followed by *Pakeban*, son of *Belersale*; *Sagbon* (Dark-cloud), *Lebenxana*, *Bupaa*, son of *Kusii*;

<sup>1</sup> Mampurugu, as we shall see later, was the seat of the Head of the foreign element, who, coming somewhere from the eastward, had founded the empires of Mampruse, Moshi, and Dagomba.

*Lebzure*, *Kunwase* (You-do-not-stroke-a-snake), son of *Lebkura*. In his time we fired arrows at the people on the Tongo hills; there was a famine and we used to rob them. All the people, except Winkorjo and Sia, rose against us, saying we were too proud. *Kunwase* was succeeded by *Kundizore* (Water-cannot-pull-down-a-hill), a son of *Sapelega*. There was also a war in his time which arose out of a quarrel during a hunting expedition, in which Bade and Yazore had taken part. Small-pox (called *Naba*, the Chief) also broke out in his time. *Kundizore* was succeeded by *Nalebseyo* (It-will-change-to-the-wet-season), son of *Kabu*. He was succeeded by *Pilibazaa* (Cover-them-all), son of *Bupaa*. During his time the Europeans came. *Pilibazaa* was taken by the white men to Gambaga and asked to pay two hundred cows because the Tongo people had fired arrows at them (the Europeans). He died at Gambaga and was succeeded by *Kunbanbeo* (Cannot-know-to-morrow), a son of *Kundizore*. He was succeeded by *Yirisano* (Destroyer-of-compounds), alias *Dentele*, a son of *Lebenwana*. In his time the Europeans came and asked the Hill-people (Ten-zugu) to come and see them, but they refused. He was succeeded by myself, *Kpama*, son of *Pilibazaa*. I brought my father's bones from Gambaga, and they were buried outside his compound.'

The above list comprises twenty-eight names, and, with other similar genealogies, supplies us with an approximate estimate of the time when the foreigners from Mampurugu first extended their influence to embrace this area. The names of these Chiefs as here given are their titles only; it is forbidden to mention their real names. Such nicknames are called *sam-cour* in Talene, *saan-yure* in Nankane.

The ruling house at Tongo belongs to the *gwegmere* (lion) clan. When I recorded the above and the other histories which follow I had not as yet grasped the full significance of what I came to discover later, namely, that in recording the history of these migrations as supplied by the Chiefs, I was really only tracing the origins of a minute section of the population, i.e. of those who formed the upper ruling class, and not of their subjects, who formed the mass of the people. In consequence I am unable, in the present instance, to specify the clans to which the majority of the inhabitants of the 'towns', already given, really belong. In my notebooks I find these clans, in nearly every case, recorded as 'the lion clan'. This is only due, however, to my having fallen into the error of failing to distinguish between rulers and ruled, and imagining the histories told me by Chiefs and their following to be applicable also to their subjects. I do not make any apology however,

for the inclusion here of such records, as, once their limitations and significance are realized, they, equally with other information recorded, go to form part of the composite picture which I am attempting to draw of the traditions of these people.

*History of Siega* (as told me by the Chief Zoaga): 'We came from Mampurugu at the same time as *Misore* (see previous history). The Winkonjo people are related to us (he refers, I believe, to the Chief of that place). My clan is lion; I am the seventeenth Chief of Siega. The Chieftainship is under (the patronage of) Kurugu and can descend to any one of the lion clan. My first-born also taboos a fowl. We have had a Chief, distinct from *Ten'dan'*, since ancient times. The first Chief of Siega was *Kukye*.'

*History of Datoko* (as told me by the present Chief, Borezina): 'We came from Mampurugu, but not with *Misore*. We travelled by way of Nun (Nungo); from Nun to Tula; from Tula to Kumbule; from Kumbule to Datoko. We met the Kusase people in the land, but drove them across the river (Volta). We marry the Kusase. We are of the lion clan. Chiefs of Datoko are appointed by Kurugu. The man who gives most presents becomes the new Chief, and on obtaining the Chieftainship will try to recover what he has paid. Now Chiefs are made by Government, but still go to Kurugu to receive the *muy'* (red fez). I am the son of the late Chief, and am ninth of my line. Datoko has six sections (*Yi-zug'*); each section, since Europeans came, is in charge of a *kambon-nab* (head gunman). Since ancient times we have had *Ten'dan'*. Their work and the Chiefs' work are separate. I settle all cases. The *Ten'dan'* performs the ceremonies when the rain does not fall, unless it is at my own *tengzan* (Nankane, *tingane*), when I perform the sacrifices.' (Here, it will be noticed, the *kambon-nab*, appointed by the Chief (who, when a vacancy occurs, bids with the other applicants for the post), are ousting the old time section-heads, called in Talene, *yi-zug-kpɛɛm*, who have been forced into the background. The *Ten'dan'* (Nankane, *Ten'dana*) has also become more or less a nonentity.)

*History of Ten'zugu* (as told me by Ten'goli): 'My ancestor came from Nasia; he was called *Sumri* and was a son of the Chief of Mampurugu. When his father died he wished to succeed him, but was driven away and came to Bulbi. His enemies followed him there, and again he fled and came to Daa, at the foot of the Tong hills. Later he went on top of the hill and settled there. He found some people called Dagali. They were Talense. We married with them. The Dagali people

belong to the *Sensereg* (squirrel) clan. We were told by them that the hill did not permit "arrows on the arms," i.e. war. We, too, said we did not want bloodshed. When the *gologo* festival came, we all met on top of the hill and danced. At this festival, the *Ten'dan'* of Dagoli and myself made beer and sacrificed to the land. A month later we sowed.' (I had purposely allowed the Chief to digress from the subject; he now continued.) 'When we came from Nasia we did not see any one here, except the Dagoli people. The Tongo people (see history) had not yet arrived from Mampurugu (near Gambaga). The Dagali had no Chiefs, only *Ten'dan'*; they wore skins. *Sumri* did not become a *Na* (Chief), because he never went back to receive his Chieftainship from Mampurugu. He became *golog'dana* (owner of the drums). The first of my ancestors to go to Mampurugu to get the Chieftainship was *Kumalbeo*; he went to *Na Paya*, the "grandfather" of the present Chief of Mampurugu. He was succeeded by *Atabea*, called after the Chief of Mampurugu, who was his *seyr'* (guardian spirit); Nankane, *segere*.) He was afraid to go to Gambaga because the Europeans were there; he fought with the Europeans because he was told that they had come to take away our land. I am Atabea's son. I was made Chief by the Europeans, but have not yet been confirmed by *Naleregu* (i.e. by the Chief of Mampruse).'

With reference to the title 'owner of the drums', I asked this informant if a man could not become a Chief in a new country independently of Mampurugu. He replied he could not do so unless 'he went to Mampurugu (near the present town of Naleregu, the former capital of the Mampruse State) whence spread all the black race.'

*History of Yamdiga* (as told me by the Chief): 'We came from Mampurugu; my *Yaba* (ancestor) was *Misore*, as was that of Tongo, Beug, and Siega. My ancestor was *Kamuni*, the eldest son of *Misore*; he was of the lion clan. The Chiefs of Yamdiga have been the following: *Gyenkaret*, *Nantog*, *Nakpeleg*, *Gingano*, *Mwampark*, *Nabrobug*, *Lebhaha*, *Na-kaha*, *Kungazur*, *Kunzerpuk*, *Kunoyokurt*, *Kosom*, *Lebdo*, and *Yinsagheg* (lit. God's food, the present Chief). We have now become Talense; we no longer circumcise, because the local people would not marry us. The Chief of Kurugu, our "father," still speaks Mampelle, but we no longer do so.'

*History of Biun*: 'We came from Naleregu (Mampruse), with *Misore*. Our clan is the lion clan; we also taboo goat, and our first-born do not eat a fowl, and women, after reaching puberty, do not eat fowls. We eat goat's flesh, but do not wear its skin until death, when we are

buried in it. Our first Chief was *Nopeog*. The present Chief is the thirteenth of his line. There are no *Ten'dan'* at Biun<sup>1</sup>; the Chief performs sacrifices. We no longer circumcise. Our Chiefs get the red fez from Kurugu. We no longer speak Dagwanert' (Dagomba).

The history of the ruling class of almost every Talense town follows these lines. This upper class were scions of the Kings of Mampruse, from which place, according to themselves, the black race, i.e. the upper classes of Moshi, Dagomba, and Mampruse—and, just possibly, Ashanti—sprang.

The *Ten'dan'*, among the Talense, have for the most part fallen upon evil days. One old grey-beard, whom I came to know well enough for him to feel he could express his thoughts to me without fear or evasion, said, 'We were once the owners of this land; since the scorpion Europeans came we have entered into holes. You have burned our bows and arrows; we once were keepers of the moons' (referring to the fact that the *Ten'dan'* knew the time for certain annual festivals and kept the calendars).

*Clans*: The word for clan—a patrilineal and exogamous division—is *burt*, pl. *bura*. As already stated above, I omitted to make exhaustive enquiries as to the clans to which the majority of the common people in each *tey* (settlement) belonged, merely recording in my notebook at the time what I had been told by the various Chiefs or their satellites, with the result that, in almost every case, I have written 'lion clan' opposite the names of the various Talense settlements. In the light of subsequent experience, I now am positive that this statement requires considerable qualification. What I recorded was really only the clan of the particular kindred-group who supplied the ruler. Had I made more extensive enquiries it would, I am certain, have been found that in each *tey* (town, Nankanse *teya*) there was a predominant, if not a single, group belonging to one or another of the clans with whose names we have now become acquainted in dealing with the Nankanse, in addition to the lion clan of the Territorial Ruler. I have, in fact, a note to the effect that the majority of the people of *Tenzu* appear to be of the *Le-ba* (leopard clan), and that certain of my informants state they belong to the *Sakur* (tortoise), *Mey* (water-turtle), *Sako* (a wild cat?), *Nwan* (monkey) and *Waf'* (python), clans.

'I rise (after death) a *sako*', said one informant, 'that is my *burt* (clan), but I also taboo *sakur* and *mey*. My ancestor *Tampertypeleg* (white-

<sup>1</sup> This, I was later informed, was not the case, but my informants did not wish the correct facts to be known.

ashes) was blind, when a *sakur* and *mey* came and asked him what was the matter. He replied, "Sickness." They said, "Open your eyes," and he could see.'

In one of the tribal histories recorded above we again have an example of the violation of a taboo after death—dressing the dead body in a goat-skin. With regard to what we may call the 'royal clan', i.e. lion clan, I was told: 'In olden times, if any one killed a lion, the skin was sent to the Chief of Kurugu, who then sent it on to the Chief of Mampurugu. There a funeral ceremony was held for it.'

*Blood Relationship*: Relationship, transmitted through the female line, is called *soog*' (compare the Nankanse *sōō*). The *soog*' groups are well known, but, as far as I could discover, do not bear any special names. The *soog*' exhibits all the characteristics already noted with regard to the Nankanse *sōō*.<sup>1</sup> A male cannot transmit a taint of witchcraft, inherited from his mother. 'If your mother can fly (*ak*) (that is, is a witch), you can fly.' (*Soe* is a witch in Talene).

'My sister's child is my *soog*', my brother's child is not; he is my son.' Again, *ziim* (blood) and *soog*' are synonymous terms.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XVIII.

THE TALENSE (*continued*)

*The Clan Settlement. The Family Compound. The Section-head (Yi-zut-kyema). The Ten'dan'. The Territorial Ruler*

THE constitution of a Talense *tey* is identical with that of the Nankanse. The *tey* (Nankane *teya*) is divided into sections, all the inhabitants of which trace descent from a common ancestor, but each, again, has, as its own more intimate ancestral spirit, a less remote ancestor, from which that particular section takes its name and to whom 'section-', as opposed to '*tey*-', sacrifices, are offered. A section is *yi-zug* (Nankane *yi-zuo*). A section-head is *Yi-zug-kpɛm* (Nankane *yi-zuo kyema*).

At Tongo there are four sections, known as (a) Pusega, (b) Guɲa, (c) Korega, (d) Seug. The post of section-head of Pusega was vacant; as 'the funeral custom of the late *yi-zut-kpɛm* had not yet been held, his successor could not be appointed'.

The section-head of Guɲa is *Sayɛzaa* (my informant, see Fig. 63); of Korega, a certain *Basego*; of Seug, vacant, for the same reason as (a).

*Election of New Section-head:* Heads of other sections met and consulted the *bay* (Nankane *baga*) to find out why the late head of the section had died. The soothsayer might say, 'It was because he did not give one of the cows, *sull* (Nankane, *sulle*), which he received for his eldest daughter, to his ancestor.' After the funeral custom his successor was appointed. 'The man who had the right to take the deceased's *bagere* (here ancestral shrine) was the one to succeed. This man was already known; the *bay* was only consulted about the funeral.'

The successor to the section-head was the 'senior' man in that section, but he was not necessarily the oldest: e.g. *A* marries a wife, *C*, by whom he has three sons, *D, E, F*, and three grandsons *G, H, I*, sons of *D, E*, and *F*; *A*, in his old age, marries a young wife, *B*, by whom he has a son, *Ƴ*. This son may be twenty years or more younger than *G, H, I*, but if *A*'s brothers are all dead and also *D, E*, and *F*, then *Ƴ* will become section head before *G, H*, or *I*, 'because *G, H*, and *I* call *Ƴ* father.'<sup>1</sup>

The tendency here, as almost everywhere in the Northern Territories, is for these hereditary section-leaders, who were really the back-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 279.



FIG. 63. Sayezaa—a section-head



bone of the old Native Administration, to be superseded and pushed aside by ambitious and often unscrupulous upstarts who bid for these minor posts before the Chief in whose patronage they lie; the almost inevitable result is that, having obtained the office, they are induced to regard it chiefly as a means of enabling them to recoup themselves for the expenses which they have incurred in securing the post.

*The Family Compounds*: These are round, flat-roofed, scattered, and, as far as I could see, in other respects similar to those already described.

*The Ten'dan'*: Among the Talense an investigation into the former status and rights of this official resulted in the confirmation of the answers already given to similar enquiries made elsewhere. The following notes may therefore be regarded as supplementary to what has previously been written concerning these individuals, and as being, for the main part, applicable to *Ten'dama* in general, and not only among the Talense.

*Duties of Ten'dan'*: (a) He takes a certain part in funeral customs; this will be dealt with under that heading. (b) He purifies the land from defilement of blood. 'The Earth does not wish any one to die, except God's death (*Yin-ku*); *kun kpemere*, a violent death, is a taboo of the land (*tey*), so if any one fights and spills blood on the land, it has to be purified (*man tey*). The one who causes the wound has to bring a fowl and a goat, if a person was actually killed, and a cow for the Chief. The sacrifice is made at the compound of the *Ten'dan'*, not where the blood fell. I will assemble all my people and send to tell the Chief that I am purifying the land. If those who had shed the blood were from the Chief's compound, he will send representatives, not otherwise. If the guilty person refuses to purify the land, I will speak and he will die. Even if I do not speak, the land will fight him, that is, permit a snake to bite him or give him head-ache or belly-ache.'

*Words Spoken at the Ceremony*: 'I will call my father and say: "Listen, they fight on your land, and give head wounds, and blood comes forth. Blood flowed and wet you, so they have brought flour, fowls, and a goat to give you." When I have spoken thus, I make the sacrifice on a heap of soil which I scrape together.'

If any one raises the war cry *kab tagulk* (Nankane, *kasega*) without a cause, he must sacrifice to the land. If any one sells another person, he must purify the land, giving a cow or sheep. 'The land owns the people, that is why a sacrifice is made to her.'

*Purification of the Land when Some One is Sold*: When a person sells

a son or a brother, he may not tell the *Ten'dan'*, nor will the latter take any notice, but sooner or later some misfortune will befall the vendor, or some of his family, and on consulting the *bay* (soothsayer) he will be informed that his having sold some one is the cause; he will be advised to give a cow, sheep, or goat to the *Ten'dan'*. He will give the offering to the land, saying: 'My father, there was a famine, and some one sold his own son, and he has brought these things. Receive them and prevent headache and belly-ache, and give them to the land.'

I asked my informant why he used his father's spirit as an intermediary. He replied, 'My ancestor knew the land before myself; all our ancestors are in the ground, which is a *bagere'* (shrine).

*Duties of the Ten'dan' in Connexion with the Making of a New Farm:* The man about to make a new farm will sacrifice to his ancestor through the head of his compound. He will then take a fowl to the *kpasodan'*<sup>1</sup> (the tenant of that land) who will give the offering to his ancestor. This tenant had originally approached the *Ten'dan'* before acquiring the land, and the sub-tenant, therefore, apparently need not again do so. A *Ten'dan'*, on giving land to any one for the first time, will ask for fowls (not white ones), one for his father, one for the land. 'After sacrificing, I will conduct the man to the land, take a hoe, break the ground, and tell the man that he may begin cultivating. I show him the boundaries of his farm. I need not tell him that anything he finds on the land is mine; he knows that already. He knows, too, that if he ever refuses to allow any one to pass over his land, or if he is greedy about his crops, not giving some to those who are hungry, I have the power to drive him from the land.'

'The *Ten'dan'* makes the land good.' 'The *Ten'dan'* owns (or rather owned, for in many places I found this ancient prerogative usurped by the Chiefs) all lost cows, sheep, goats, donkeys, fowls, iron, hoes, axes, and brass ornaments. A *Ten'dan'* is never succeeded by his brother or by his son. This hat [referring to the distinctive string hat worn by *Ten'dan'*] is not a rich thing. Any one in a section may become *Ten'dan'*.'

Again: 'When the Mampruse, under *Misore*, first came here, they captured a man near a well who said he was the *Ten'dan'* of Gbeo. Later on *Misore* found other *Ten'dan'* at Bare, Ka, and Kundugu. He did not kill them, but appointed them to sacrifice to the land and show him her *kyihir* (avoidances, Nankane *kyisiri*), and rights—avoidance of blood, right of *Ten'dan'* to lost property or anything found on the

<sup>1</sup> Nankane, *Kusoodana*.

land. The *Ten'dan'* of Bade also told *Misore* about the festival of the 'bad water-moon.'<sup>1</sup>

*The Territorial Ruler:* The position of the territorial rulers among the Talense appears to be so similar to that already described when discussing the neighbouring tribe, the Nankanse, as to leave little or nothing to add to what has been recorded. The Talense Chiefs go to Kurugu for their 'red fez.' When a vacancy occurs, there is a scramble among those eligible to fill the vacancy, one vying with another for the post, which, as likely as not, falls to the highest bidder. This method of selection would appear to have very little to recommend it, save that it appears to have been in vogue before our advent in these parts. No doubt it does not 'pay' the Chief, in whose hands the selection lies, to appoint a man who is wholly unacceptable to the people, and the 'presents' tendered on these occasions seem to have been a recognized and not unimportant portion of the revenues accruing to a head Chief. The custom becomes, perhaps, more subject to abuse when we find it practised in turn by the lesser Chiefs in the appointment of the *kambon na*, who, as I have already stated, often seem to usurp the positions which should by right be held by the section-leaders.

In an old 'District Record Book,' at Zuargu, under a date of nearly twenty years ago, I found a note, of which the following is an extract. It refers, I think, more especially to those Chiefs whom I have named 'Government-made-Chiefs': 'The people look with suspicion on any one who prospers and becomes the owner of property, or on any of their so-called 'Chiefs,' who, backed up by us, "put on airs," and try to assume control over the people. The Chiefs have no prestige, no historical names to quote as their predecessors.' This is as true to-day as it was twenty years ago.

The position of the head of a family and of other members of his household among the Talense does not exhibit any features with which we are not already familiar. The following is an additional note on pawns.

*Talem* (pawns): A man may want to get money to become a Chief and pawn (verb, *nwe talem*) his son. If he is head of a house, he need not ask any one's permission; if not, he will consult his father or elder brother. 'A pawn's head is not shaved as is a slave's.' A boy is pawned for from one to four cows. The debtor is *sandan*, the creditor *bondam*. If the *talem* dies, the *sandan* still has to pay. Famine might cause a man to pawn or sell his son. 'If you sell any one, you give the *Ten'dan'* a goat or a fowl because the land does not agree to that (*tey npu sayera*.)'

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXVI.

THE TALENSE (*continued*)

*Property and Inheritance. Particular Significance of Certain Relationship Terms. Rites de Passage. Shrines. Soothsayers*

**PROPERTY and Inheritance:** The rules already given in Chapter XXII for the devolution of private, family, and ancestral property apply equally here. I noted, however, in many cases, deliberate attempts to mislead the enquirer, being repeatedly told that the son succeeds to his father's property to the exclusion of the brother. In every case where such a statement was made it was found that the wish was father of the thought, and that in no case was such succession in conformity with Native customary law. In one of the histories recorded in the previous chapter it will be noted that a son succeeded his father, but this was only due to the coincidence that when *Misere* was driven away from Mampruse he was not accompanied by any of his brothers. The real facts are, that, where there are no brothers, the eldest 'son,' not necessarily of the deceased—he may be son of deceased's brother—succeeds.

**Particular Significance of Certain Relationship Terms:** No new facts were disclosed which have not already been discussed, save in connexion with the marriage avoidances relating to cross-cousins.<sup>1</sup> With regard to these, the following, perhaps ingenious rather than convincing, excuse was given for the prevalent dislike for such unions.

'If you married your mother's brother's daughter, and quarrelled about the cows paid to your *aben* or *asen* (maternal uncle, Nankane *asiba*) for *sull*, (Nankane, *sulle*), this would lead to trouble. Suppose you quarrelled with your wife after marriage and she returned to her father, who is your maternal uncle, you would ask him to return the cows. Should he not do so, you would be entitled to seize cows belonging to any person from his, that is from your own mother's, town; you would descend into the valley (*sig bog nyog nigi*; Nankane, *sig bog nyoge*). After doing so you could no longer perform sacrifices to your mother or to her mother; you would not sleep; your children would die, and your uncle would also suffer.'

**Marriage with Father's Sister's Daughter:** A somewhat similar explanation was given for this avoidance. 'You cannot marry her because

<sup>1</sup> See p. 4.

of the cows. If she went back home you would claim the cows back from her father, who is your own "father," and this would interfere with the sacrifices to your father and father's father.'

*Marriage Customs:* These appear to be almost identical with those of the Nankanse, as will be seen from the following: The suitor approaches the father of the girl, who refers him to his eldest brother, or father, if alive. The suitor brings tobacco to the girl's father and mother; they show these gifts to the head of the compound. Three or four days later the suitor will bring a dead guinea-fowl and give it to his future mother-in-law. This gift is called *po-bore-bono* (something with which to seek a wife). Later, the suitor will send a live fowl and guinea-fowl and corn by a messenger known as *ahen* (*isiga* in Nankane). These offerings will be given to the girl's *seyr* (guardian spirit) by the head of her house, who will say: 'Receive these things; the girl has reached puberty; she is ready to go to her husband; the day they bore her, they gave her to you.' The girl now goes to the bridegroom's town, to the compound of the *ahen* (who is a son of a woman who came from the bride's town). There she remains three days, after which she goes to her husband. Sometimes the cows have to be paid before the girl leaves her father's compound; they are then known as *lay bo* (*leka* in Nankane). Sometimes they are paid long after marriage and are then called *sull' bono*. After the bride has gone to her husband's compound, her brothers will go there, and her husband will kill a dog for them, and a fowl and some goats. After they have returned home, the bridegroom will send the *ahen* with a live cock to the section-head who is 'half-brother' to the head of the section to which the bride belongs, and also a dead guinea-fowl to the bride's mother. These gifts are called *sandan* (compare Nankane *sandono*). Without this formality the marriage is not legal, however many cows are paid, nor may the husband claim adultery damages. This gift is to obtain a witness. If the woman later leaves her husband, the same *ahen* will claim back the cows.

*Funeral Customs:* The following account of a Talense funeral was given me by the *Ten'dan* of Tongo:

'When a man dies I have to make the grave.' (This is not to be taken literally; he will be represented by a brother or son.) 'I go to the spot with ashes in a red pot and mark out the grave in a circle. I then dig a little and hand the axe (*lebo*) to the *bayas* (sextons) and they continue to dig the grave (*yeog*'). I then begin to sacrifice. The *kunran* (the person in charge of the funeral custom) gives me a fowl (not a

white one) and a goat (any colour but white) and some flour and water. I give the flour-water first, saying: "My father, accept this water, drink, and give it to this earth; death has killed and they have called me and taken their fowl and goat and given them to you because they will beat your head; because of this they say that I must receive and give to you".

'The fowl is then killed beside the grave: "My father, receive and give to the land." The goat is killed and its blood caught in a red pot. The fowl is roasted whole. The goat is skinned and the flesh divided; I take a hind leg, the head, neck, liver, and skin. We all eat at the graveside. A small piece of each sacrifice is put on the land. The corpse is brought and taken from its mat; it is buried naked save for a goat-skin. The corpse is laid on its right side, knees drawn up, hands folded under the cheeks. If the dead is a male, he faces east, because a man is always impatient for dawn. A woman is buried facing the setting sun because she is always so busy that she says, "The sun is setting, I shall not have time to grind; I shall not have time to get my husband's food." As the body is being lowered I say to the land, "Receive your thing, let it go inside nicely".' A stone is placed over the entrance of the grave. The *Ten'dan'* takes a hoe and scrapes up some earth from each side over the stone; others then complete the work.'

Figs. 64-5 show Talense graves. Fig. 64 is that of a Chief. I do not think that there is any doubt but that the design of the spirit shrines were originally copied from such structures. The shape of a Talense grave within, is, I am informed, like that already described, i.e. more or less circular with a bottle-neck. Chiefs, who, as we have seen, are of Mampruse origin, are buried in their own compound in a room which is broken down after the funeral custom.<sup>1</sup> The grave of a Chief is called *duye*, that of a commoner *yeo*. Chiefs are sacrificed to on the *duye* by the eldest son. 'When a man or woman dies, he or she will become an axe or bangle.'

*Shrines:* Talense shrines and the cult associated with them appear to be very similar to those of the Nankanse. I propose to take my reader round the compound of my friend Sayebere, a *Ten'dan'* of Tongo (see frontispiece), and let him describe in his own words the various shrines which are there encountered. Outside the compound walls is a pot set on stones, containing, he said, ground roots and earth. On top of the pot is a head-rest, smeared with the feathers of past sacrifices, and on top of this again, a stone. This fetish (*tim*, lit. 'medi-

<sup>1</sup> A room near the outside is chosen.

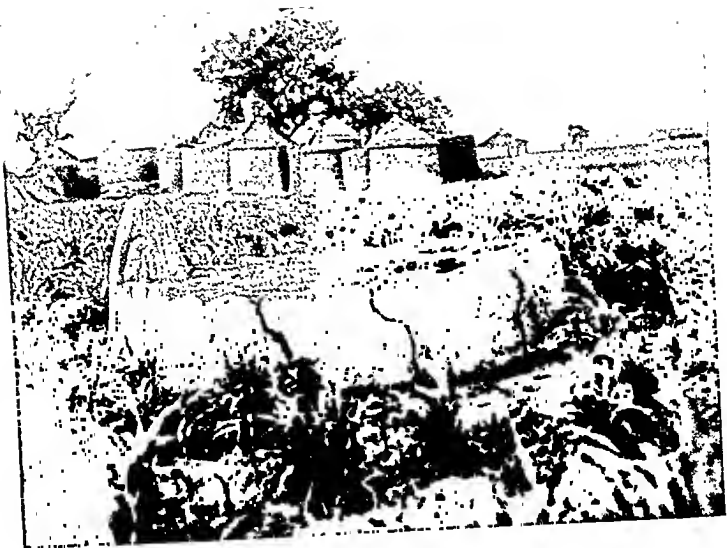


FIG. 64. Grave of Talense chief

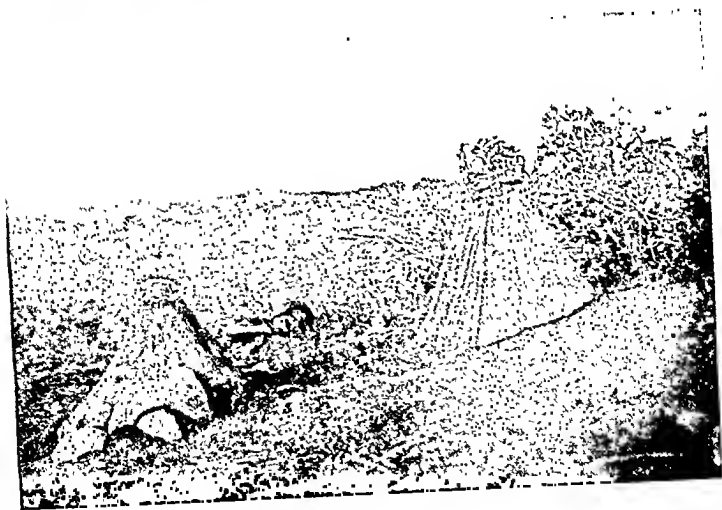


FIG. 65. Talense graves

cine' or 'roots') is 'to prevent war'; it is called *mweley* (compare Nankane *mweleya*<sup>1</sup>). 'When the war cry is raised I will first sacrifice a fowl on the stone, saying: "They want to shoot arrows, and I wish to stop it; receive a fowl, and compel them not to shoot; let the women and children sleep." The stone on top of the head-rest signifies that we compel people to sit down. After I sacrifice the fowl, cow dung

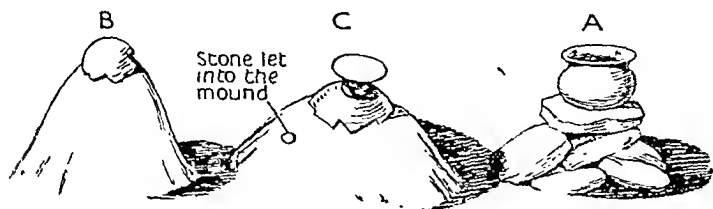


FIG. 66

and corn-cobs are placed round the pot and set on fire, while I say: "My father, call your father; let women and children sleep; they wish to shoot arrows; fire wants to burn the land, but I wish it to be cool." When the fire which I have lit goes out, the war is also burning out. The roots inside the pot are from a shea butter tree; when you eat shea butter your heart will become cool. This *tim bagere* (medicine shrine) is related to the one I wear round my neck which is also called *mweley*. I take it off and place it on top of the stone when the fire is burning. Some *mweley* are now used by Chiefs to encourage disputes in order that they may be able to fine people.'

The above account was written nearly two years before my note on the same subject among the Nankanse.<sup>2</sup> I had, indeed, forgotten the latter, until I came to go over my notes in writing these volumes. It affords a good example, coupled with other evidence, of the close resemblance between the religion and customs of these two tribes, and also of the accuracy of the information imparted by two wholly independent informants. Unfortunately, the photograph I took of this shrine was not successful, but Fig. 66 A, is a rough diagram illustrating it and other shrines standing beside it. On the left of the *mweley* fetish stand two conical mounds, B and C. B is, Sayebere informed me, that of his *yab-pak la o bi* (grandmother and her son). The clay mound had a flat piece of iron on top covered by a potsherd and stone. C is a *Tini zug-bagere* (God-above shrine). On the apex of the mound was a piece of iron let into the clay which was covered

<sup>1</sup> See p. 303.<sup>2</sup> See p. 304.



with congealed blood and fowls' feathers. The top was protected with the usual broken pot.

'Into the first, B, come the spirits of three persons to receive flour-water and fowls; they help me to find wives and children. The second, C, is my *Yini* who sent me down and gave me life and my *Ten'dan*'ship.

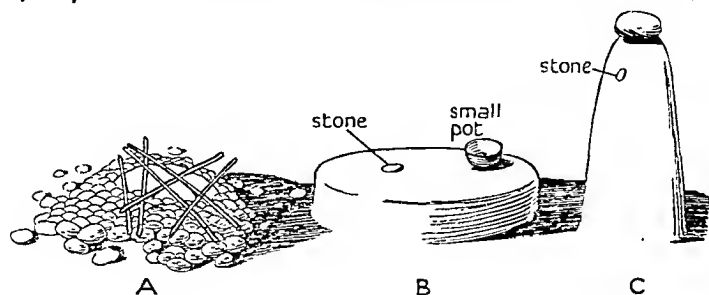


FIG. 67

It helps me to get life, women and children. God kept me formerly, afterwards he sent me.'

Facing these two shrines, and close to the wall of the *zoyo* hut, were three more shrines, see Fig. 67.

B is the *Yini* of Sayebere's father, Pirun. A he called a *Tobog*. A consisted of a heap of round stones with sticks laid on top, surrounding a larger stone sunk in the ground. 'The small round stones are there for the *tobog*' to throw at anything bad coming into the compound. The *tobog*' is *tim* (medicine) to protect me and give me life,' he said, 'It belonged to my father'. I think there is little doubt but that this shrine was for the spirit of a man whom Sayebere's father had killed. (Compare the Nankanse *tobega*.) C was a tall conical shrine, with a stone let into the mud surface, called *dun-kpaleg*; 'It was my father's *bogere*,' said Sayebere. 'The power of my hat and skin are in it. When I sacrifice to it, I call all the spirits of the old *Ten'dan*' and of my father to assemble and drink water, striking the stone let into the side with the stone which rests on top.'

*Shrines Inside the Compound*: Inside the compound in the yard, called in Talene *dendoy* (in Nankane *zinzaka*), is a large grain-store (*bur*; Nankane *bare*) with a chameleon (*nangan*; Nankane *ngana*) in bas-relief on the side (see Fig. 68; Sayebere's hand is resting on the chameleon<sup>1</sup>). This is the shrine of his father's father's wife, a certain

<sup>1</sup> Compare Fig. 30, which shows a similar shrine among the Nankanse.

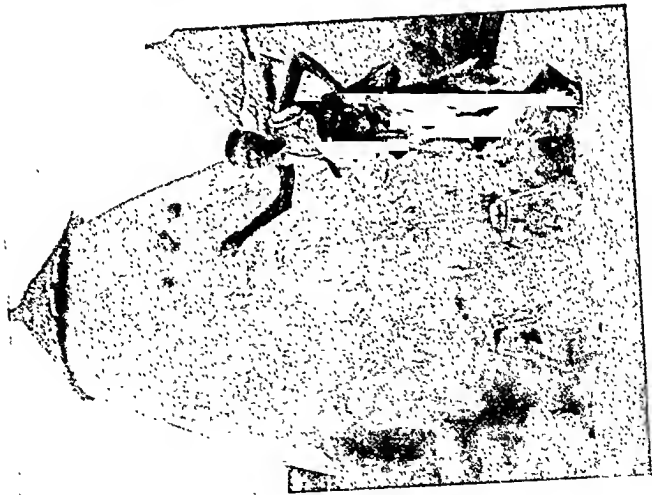


FIG. 68. 'Sayebere's hand is resting on the  
chameleon'



FIG. 69. Talense shrines

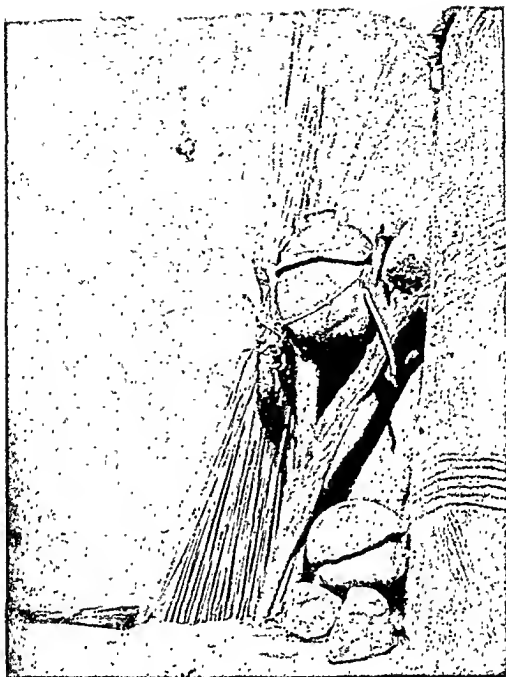


FIG. 70. A *tim bager*



FIG. 71. 'The soothsayer then began to rattle'

Bama. At the foot of this grain-store were other shrines, seen rather indistinctly in the photograph.

One is the shrine for the spirit of a woman called Tapur, who was a co-wife to Bama, both being wives of Sayebere's paternal grandfather. Another is a shrine of Bama. There was also a large stone. 'Bama asked for this through a soothsayer.'

Moving further round the grain-store we come to another series of shrines which are illustrated in the photographs, Figs. 69-70.

In Fig. 69 A is the shrine of the *Ten'dan's* own mother, Kurug; the actual spirit is in the head of a hoe let into the clay; B, a log of wood with a stone on top. I seem to have omitted to record what this was; C is a pot out of which an infant which has become ward of a spirit is given to drink.

Fig. 70 Sayebere called a *tim bager*, 'But,' he added, 'it is also called *anoa-dok* (a mouth pot).'<sup>1</sup> He was in a state of great trepidation lest I should uncover it, saying, holding his nostrils as he spoke, 'It is my life. When I sacrifice to it I say, "Mouth pot receive and protect me from mouths".' It had, he said, many avoidances; these included: Passing behind its owner when he was eating; carrying a flaming faggot past it; mention of the word moon (*mwarega*) while its owner was eating.

The fetish consisted of a pot, covered with another broken pot, a bow, bundle of arrows, and a quiver. The bow, arrows, and quiver had, he said, been added to the pot after consultation with a soothsayer.

*Bogere and Bagerc*: There seems a distinction between these shrines so named, which hardly appears to exist among the Nankanse.

'A *bogere*,' said my Talega informant, 'you fetch from your mother's country after she is dead. You go to your mother's father's compound, and take some earth from the *bagerc* of your mother's father and put this in a calabash, which your wife will carry home. She must not speak to any one except her husband on the return journey. This soil will be put in a horn and is called my mother's *bogere*. Your mother's spirit may have become an iron bangle, that is a *bagerc*; a *bogere* is like a shade to a *bagerc*. A man's house may become 'bitter'; he consults and is told that it is his mother who wants a room. He makes one; that is a *bagerc*. After that, he will go to his mother's home and bring earth from the mound which has been made there for his mother's father's spirit, and bring it home, and build a new mound with the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 301.

new soil and the old. This new mound is a *bogere*. When the *bogere* comes, the *bagere* has become strong. When he wants to sacrifice he will say: "My mother, call your father."

'A mother's spirit has power over her son. Suppose your mother's spirit wants to punish (*ey*, lit. to "do") her son, and the father's spirit wishes to prevent her doing so, the mother will say to her husband, "Had I died while in conception, would you have had this child?"'

Among the Nankanse the word *bugere* or *bogere* is used only in connexion with a *bakologo* shrine. An ordinary *bagere* has no *bogere*, but when a soothsayer's shrine is made, in which is, e.g., the soothsayer's mother's mother's spirit, he will fetch earth from his grandmother's town from the *bagere* shrine of her father. This is brought home in a small pot and becomes the *bugere* or *bogere* of the *bakologo*. 'It gives the power to the *bakologo*.'

*A Seance attended at Tongo:* A woman had died from snake-bite, and after she had been buried a soothsayer was brought to her husband's compound to be consulted about the cause of her death. The family of the dead woman was represented by an Elder from her section. The ceremony began by the consultant holding the soothsayer's bag with both hands and saying, '*N' gyi i lugeri ka kye i nor*' (I hold your sides, but not your mouth). The soothsayer then began to rattle (see Fig. 71), and said, '*N ba Yin, n bol i, la i bol i banam, ka ba tana zin, mam mi nireba n zi wa, ka n po mi bay bol ma sere yi na bay de n be, te te*'. (My father's *Yin*, I call you, and you will call your fathers and they will come and sit down. I know these people sitting (here), but I do not know the reason that they call me. You will know what it is; give us).

He then began to sing:

'*Golugdan, Kanbung mwan lang kai bagere. Yi na bay surdan. Kpolebeo saam zeret; mam kpalim la popelimi koy yiri, ma mam kpelim mwee.*' (*Golugdan, Kanbung*, mere supposition is not (proper) soothsaying. You will know the one who is angry. Bad *dawa dawa* seeds spoil soup. I entered a hole<sup>1</sup>; I became infected with misfortune; I was obedient; now I have no house. Mother, I am still rattling). The soothsayer now emptied out the contents of his bag on the ground; the consultant held the end of the wand and went through the customary performance of picking out objects with it, the soothsayer singing the while. The wand seemed to search among the miscellaneous oddments, pounced on the hoof of a cow, on a fragment of a calabash,

<sup>1</sup> He refers to his having worked in the gold mines.



FIG. 72. Ancestral shrines

on a gourd seed, on a hair ball from the stomach of a cow. I was later told that all this was interpreted as meaning that the father of the dead woman's husband had failed to give to his ancestor one of the cows which he had received for a daughter, hence vengeance had been taken on his son's wife.

After the seance a fowl was killed; this, falling on its back, was taken as proof that what the soothsayer had said was correct.

THE TALENSE (*continued*)*Ceremonies in Connexion with Sowing and Harvest.  
The Talense Calendar*

THERE appear to be at least three great festivals which are held by the Talense in connexion with the crops and harvest. These are:

- (a) *Gologo*, held in the month of February by the whole of the Talense.
- b) *Bugram Waa* (lit. the *Bugram* dance) held in October by the following towns: Sia, Winduri, Gorogo, Wakyi, Ten'zugu, and Gbeo.
- (c) *Da koom*, *Da mey* or simply *Waa*, (the dance) held by Bade and Tongo, in the months of August and September.

Among the Nankanse we have seen that the October festival is called *Tingana* (the Groves), or simply *Waa* (the Dance), a festival which is held by Winkono, Orogo, Kologo, and Na, in rotation.

(a) *The Gologo Ceremony*: It was my intention to have attended this ceremony in person; hence I omitted to obtain a full description of it. I am informed, however, that during the time when the festival is being held 'every one is permitted to abuse his neighbour and even to laugh at any physical deformity, and that no one is allowed to quarrel'. All this seems most reminiscent of the *Apo* ceremony, which has been described in another volume.<sup>1</sup> Circumstances, however, prevented me ever carrying out my intention, and a full description of this ceremony must be left to some other historian to record. I hope an account of it will be obtained before the extraordinarily rapid changes in conditions in these parts have interfered with or altered its characteristic observances.

*The Da koom and Da mey Ceremonies*: 'When we dance these, all our ancestors sleep. When the time approaches for the ceremonies, the *Ten'dan'* of Bade takes a calabash (*zu-gur*, lit. a head-calabash), puts it in a net, and hangs it outside the entrance to the *soyo* hut. When the rain falls, it is filled. Before dawn, early in the morning after the appearance of the new moon, the Bat (*Anglice* Bade) *Ten'dan'* pours out

<sup>1</sup> See *Askeni*, Chapter XV.



some of the water from this calabash on the ground, saying: 'Your day is drawing near, and I wish to pour water for you that the corn may be good. Your moon stands.' A little only of the water is poured out, but the remainder is kept until the next moon, which is the *Daa mey* (or 'real' *Daa*). The first water is called *Ko'-beet* (bad water); the water poured out later is called *Ko'soy* (good water). Until the *Ten'dan'* of Bade has performed this ceremony no one may begin to hold the custom; we dance thirty nights at the grove. Seven days after the bad water is poured out, beer and a fowl are given to the land with the words:

'*Misore* and his father wish to come forth; receive, and let the women and children come out to dance and let the men meet them there. Prevent headache and belly-ache and may everything bad on the land (snakes, scorpions) hide away.'

As they dance they sing: *La pug dill* (the corn is blooming).

At the end of thirty days the Bade *Ten'dan'* pours out the rest of the water on the ground, saying: 'This is the good water I am pouring to-day; may the land become good; may women bear children and the corn become good.' He pours out the whole of the water. The *Daa mey* has now arrived and the people dance for fifteen nights, singing: *Laa moo zimi* (It [the corn] is red). Every one assembles by the full moon at the grove called *Pusig* (the name of a tree now no longer standing).

The *Ten'dan'* of Gbeo sacrifices at *Misore's* grave.<sup>1</sup> When he reaches the grove, he takes some beer, flour, and a fowl, which the Chief of Tongo has given him, and sacrifices at the spot where the *pusig* tree used to stand, saying to the land: 'The Chief gives me these things for you because the days (of the festival) are ending. We wish to return the drums to the house; allow the women and children to sleep in peace; allow the men to go hunting.' He then makes the sacrifices.

The drums, called *Tusgunwaa*, are kept by the Chief and are never brought out except at this ceremony or at a death. '*Daa* is a dance on the land that it may know all is well.'

Formerly the day of sowing was common to all, so all harvests became ripe at the same time. Now people plant independently, so that the reaping is done at different times. The *Da koom* may not be held until all the *nara* is cut, so that the date is not now constant.

<sup>1</sup> See *History*, Chapter XXXIII.

*Months of the Year in Talense:*

OCTOBER. *Bugram Namboo*.

NOVEMBER. *Kabunuhu Namboo* (harvest moon).

DECEMBER. *Koor-oro Namboo* (cold moon).

JANUARY. *Nyoo Namboo* (burning moon).

FEBRUARY. *Gologo Namboo*.

MARCH. *Sibig Namboo*.

APRIL. *Siga Namboo*.

MAY. *Namboo woo* (empty moon).

JUNE. *Nar-cheog Namboo* (cutting millet moon).

JULY. *Nar-birt Namboo* (bad corn moon).

AUGUST. *Daa-koom Namboo*.

SEPTEMBER. *Daa Namboo*.

THE TALENSE (*continued*)*Tɔy-nab*

THE ceremony I am about to describe was one which I witnessed on Sunday 6 May 1928. It was, perhaps, the most interesting and extraordinary of many curious rites which it has been my privilege to attend in the course of many years of anthropological field-work. Perhaps I regard it thus because particular associations have made it so for me, but I use the word 'extraordinary' advisedly, on account of the almost grotesque blending of the ultra-new with the things which are very old. Flying machines, motor-cars, and the cultivation of cocoa—these seem out of place with pagan gods and naked humanity, but in this ceremony all were mingled, and staged in a setting which must have been familiar to troglodyte man. *Tɔy-nab*<sup>1</sup> means literally the Chief of Tɔy. Its shrine is perhaps the best known in the country about which I write, and its fame and name have passed beyond the boundaries of the Northern Territories and reached as far down as to the sea-board towns of the Gold Coast.

'Its power is from God (*Na Yin*); its priest is the local *Ten'dan*'; its taboos, which must be observed by all its devotees, include the following avoidances:

- (a) Clothes, when attending ceremonies in connexion with its cult.
- (b) *Zia-kom* (corn and water mixed).
- (c) Beer made from *zia*-corn.
- (d) *Meja* (water turtle).
- (e) *Sakur* (tortoise).
- (f) *Bandog* (crocodile).
- (g) *W'afo* (python).

An oath may be taken on this god, which runs: *M'po Tɔy nab la a zia koom* (I swear by *Tɔy nab* and its corn-water).

The home of this deity is in the Tɔng Hills, that beautiful low range which rises from the compound-scattered millet flats below. There seem to be two rendezvous at which the hundreds of pilgrims, who come from all quarters in the dry seasons to make their vows before this shrine, foregather. After climbing from the plains one enters a rugged

<sup>1</sup> It is also known as *Ta ni* and *Ta pɛiga*.

defile, which winds up the hill-side and then suddenly emerges on a grassy table-land, the home of countless flocks of wild guinea-fowl. There are no villages or compounds on the summit, for, after the punitive expedition many years ago, the people were ordered to come down from the hill-tops and live in the valley.

The god itself, which is supposed to be an emanation of the Supreme Being, does not, as far as I could discover, possess any shrine beyond a natural temple in the form of a large rock cavern, where the service about to be described was held, and a rock altar, that may or may not have been natural, in front of a second cavity in the rock not very far from the first cave, the entrance to which was hung with filthy old rags. The altar was so smothered in fowls' feathers, which also lay more than ankle deep on the ground, that I could not be certain of its composition.

On the morning of the ceremony I reached the rocks below the first cave about 8 a.m. and found I was the first arrival. The Chief of Ten'zugu and the *Ten'dan'* had not yet appeared. From then onwards, until about 9 a.m., groups of pilgrims began to arrive. To my wonder and astonishment I saw well-dressed Africans, men and women who I later discovered, had motored hundreds of miles from Kumasi, Kwahu, and Mampon. Among these were several of my Ashanti friends of old days, and never shall I forget the look of amazement on their faces at meeting me again in such a place. About 9 a.m. the Chief of Ten'zugu and the *Ten'dan'* arrived. The former was a really magnificent-looking man, standing well over six feet and very finely proportioned. He was covered in amulets and fetishes, as was the *Ten'dan'* (see Figs. 73 and 74).

I told them (as we had indeed already arranged) that I would like to attend the ceremony and register my wish and make my vows. They asked permission to go forward and make preparation, and soon afterwards I heard the rhythmic clapping of hands, which was faintly audible to us below. All the pilgrims now began to undress. The Coast women disrobed and put on shorts; hats, shoes, white pith helmets, and clothes were piled up and scattered over the boulders (see Fig. 75). We were now called to come forward, and climbed up the rocks until we came to the low entrance of the cave (see Fig. 76). This we were asked to enter backwards. Soon the cave was packed so full that many were sitting on their companions' legs and laps. I know I had a person on each knee. Some one asked me to give my name and what I wanted. I asked Aboya, who was with me, to state the nature of my work; how I was trying to record their ancient customs, that the best of them

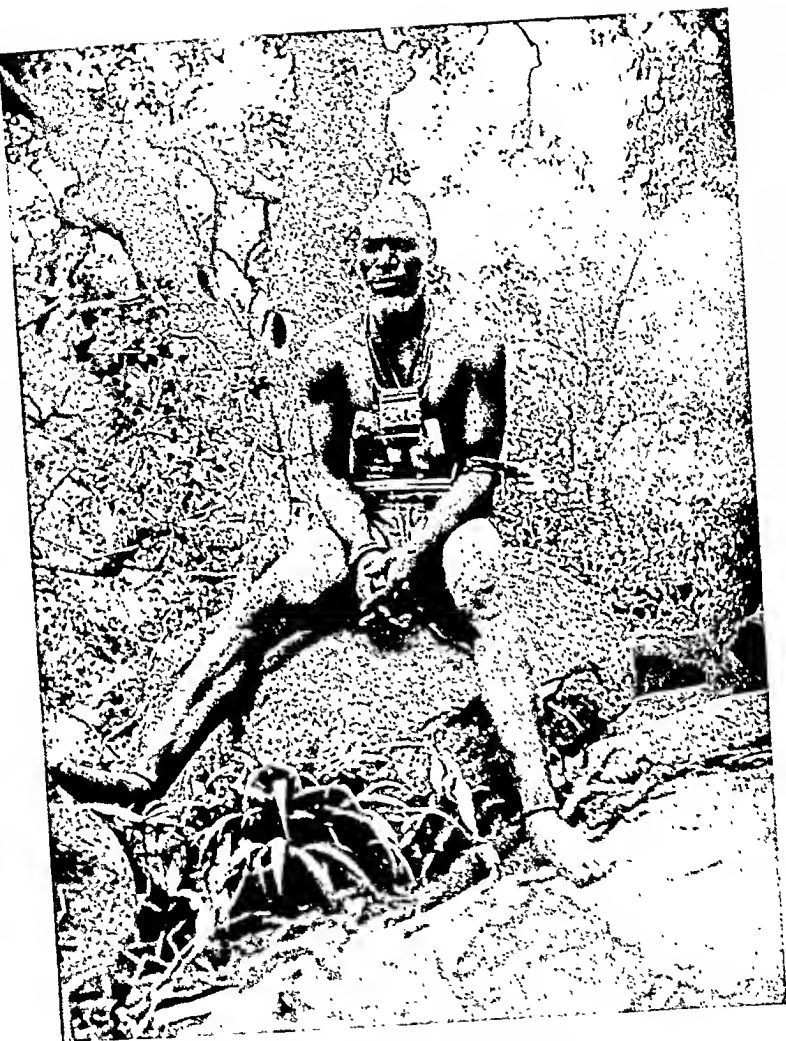


FIG. 73. The Chief of Tej'zugu



FIG. 74. 'The Chief of Tej'zugu and the *Ten'dan*' arrived'

might be retained, and that I would like a blessing on this task. I also said I hoped some day to fly over this spot, and I ended with the promise of a cow if these requests were granted.

I was, about this time, planning a solo flight from England to the Gold Coast. On 12 January, just eight months later, almost at the same hour, I was to look down from a height of 6,000 ft. through the harmattan haze on these same hills, just an hour before reaching Tamale, my journey's end.

To return to the cave. The *Ten'dan'*, after Aboya had finished what I asked him to say, spoke as follows:

*'M'ba n bol i, bol i ba, ko o bol Takuru-nab ka ba tana zin Tɔy-nab nend-an la ba dee Silmiga soma-soma; ko o kyen te tum o tuma sea ko o bort. O yi nye a zaag' on te i naf'. Fo me na mal o, ka dee i nafon. I yi mal o i na dee' i naf. Kye ku o yur' du gar' o tab zaa; kye ka naam, pahe naam. Tulg' de gbwa a o dan serce; ko o kyen len siliga, i to dee' i naf'; layem mora ban kab dol o a o bisi, ka bam n'deyir tir to.'*

Translation: 'My father, I call your father that he may call Takuru-nab,<sup>1</sup> that they may come and sit before Tɔy-naba's face and receive the white man favourably; permit him to work at the work which he wishes to do. He says that if he sees all, he will give you a cow. Permit his name to mount up more than all his neighbours and let Chieftainship be added to Chieftainship. Do not allow fever to catch him any day; let him go and return (like) a hawk, that you may be able to receive your cow. Keep his children who will follow him, that they may receive and give us.'

At the end of this speech—which is rather amusing from our point of view for the prominence given to the matter of the cow—a long wail came from somewhere in the back of the cave. Every one then clapped their hands with a kind of masonic rhythm for the space of at least a minute.

Other pilgrims now rose one at a time, and the cave echoed to the old familiar Ashanti tongue. Their petitions were then translated into Talenc, in which language they were finally recited by the *Ten'dan'*. At the end of each petition the pilgrim was asked his or her name and this was passed on, and at the termination of each request hands were clapped as before. This was all; the statement, the repetition in Talenc to the god, a wail, the clapping of hands, silence, a shuffling or a squelch of a sweaty naked body, as the next pilgrim squirmed to his feet to tell of his troubles.

<sup>1</sup> Possibly *Ta-kora*, see *Ashanti*, Chapter XIX.

The following are a selection of these petitions; in my notebook; they are jotted down in the vernacular (Ashanti) of which the following are literal translations:

'I was at my town of Mampon, and I heard about grandfather (*nana*, here a term of respect), so I came to lean upon him, that he might give me health, which I once had. I keep a store and I have two motor-cars. From that store I derive no profit whatever. As for my two motor-cars, when I ply them for hire and people enter them, I only incur debts and there is no profit in them. Because of that, and because I have heard of grandfather, I have come to ask him if he will show me the way to make profit. Again, I have four wives and they have either not borne children, or, if they have, the children die. Therefore help me, and permit my wives to bear children, and give my relations health and long life.'

Another: 'As for me, I come from Kwawu (in the Colony). Now the work which we do to-day is farming, but when I do it I get no profit. When I cultivate cocoa, and the trees grow, they die, or when the trees bear pods, they rot. I also have a store, but I get no profit from that; then I heard about *nana* and I came to lean upon him, that he may give me and all my relations life, my nephews and my "brothers" life, and that I may obtain much profit.'

Another: 'I am a clerk, who pays his debts, as my neighbours pay me what they owe me, yet I have not a copper (*capre*). I have four wives, yet none of them has a child; when one bears an infant, it dies. I have heard of *nana* and I have come to take myself and put myself in his hands that he may help me and let me get much money.'

Another: 'I come from a street in Kwawu. I have heard about *nana*. The work which men do these days is farming. I have a plantation, but I get nothing out of it; when the crops ripen, beasts (i.e. insects) eat them, and the cocoa-trees die. Whatever I do, I get in debt; therefore I have come to lean upon you, that you may help me and give me profit.'

*A Woman's Prayer*: 'I have come from a street in Kwawu, and I have heard of *nana*, and I have brought myself to lean on you, that you may give me life. I was in Kumase and I bore a child and it died, so I give myself to you, in order that if any one has caused this you may kill him, and guard me and let me bear another. If I do, I will repay you.'

Another: 'I have come from Mampon. I have heard about this god. I have a sickness in my belly; it never ceases; it cries out *ko! ko!*





FIG. 75. 'Clothes were piled up and scattered over the boulders'

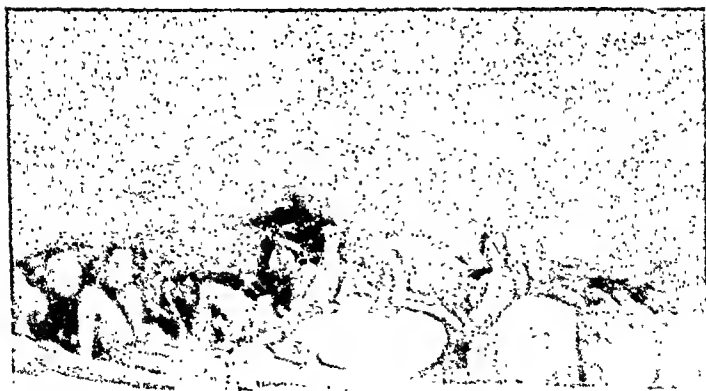


FIG. 76. 'We came to the low entrance of the cave'



FIG. 77. The old *Ten'dan'* about to make the  
sacrifice

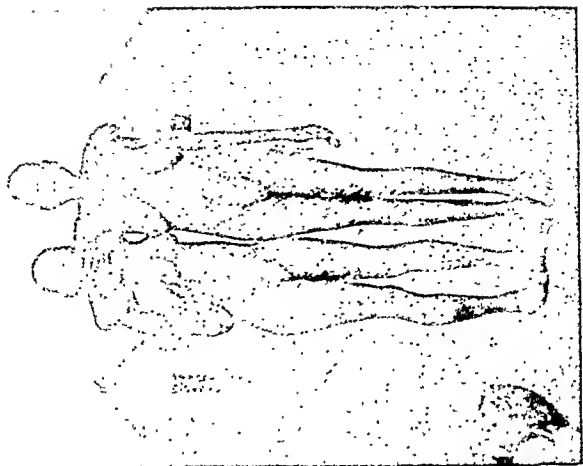


FIG. 78. Talense women

Look to my sickness that it may cease. If any one is doing this to me, catch him for me, or kill him and let me get health and strength.'

Another: 'I was in my town when I heard of this god, that he is strong, so I came to lean on him that he may help me. I am a person who drinks gin always and I am become a drunkard. Help me to stop drinking. Again, whatever work I do, I get in debt. If some one is doing all this to me, let *nana* catch him or kill him for me.'

When I state that these supplicants were educated men and women, some of whom owned large businesses, well-furnished European houses, and not a few of them their own cars, in which they had come hundreds of miles to visit this pagan god, the power and influence of the old beliefs may readily be imagined. I need not multiply examples. All the petitions were based on the same formula—the god was *nana*, the supplicants had come to lean upon him (*dan neho*). They were promised nothing. If their prayers were answered, they would bring back an offering. Nearly every one asked for 'money' or 'profit'.

When the service was ended, we all backed out again into the sunlight and were led, complete silence being enjoined upon us, to the entrance of the second cave. Here the offerings were sacrificed over a mound so smothered in congealed blood and feathers as to hide its surface completely.

The *Ten'dan'* lifted up a round stone and tapped it against this altar. Each person then handed him the offering he or she had brought. Its throat was cut, the blood flowed on the altar, and the sacrifice was cast down. My sheep was sacrificed last of all. The photograph, Fig. 77, shows the old *Ten'dan'* about to cut its throat. All this was carried out in complete silence. We all then returned to where every one had undressed, and each person was smeared with a line of red clay on the side of each cheek, between the breasts, on each forearm, on the legs and back. This ended the ceremony.

## THE NAMNAM

*History, Tribal and Clan Organization*

THE Namnam (*Anglice* Nabdams) are a tribe numbering 8,063. They inhabit the triangular strip of country bounded on the east by the Red Volta; the Talense lie to the south, the Nankanse on the west. They are among the smallest of the Northern Territory tribes. The people call themselves Namnam (sing. Nabt), the language Nabte, and their country Nabrug. The Namnam call the Kasena, Yuls, and the Nankanse, Gurse; the Kanjagas, Bulse, and the Mampruse and Dagomba, Dagbwan. Specimens of the Nabte language have been given in Chapter III.

The capital town (*teya*) of the head Chief is Nangoot (*Anglice* Nangode). The following history was given me by the head Chief: 'Our first ancestors were called *Loro* and *Zan*. *Zan* is the name of a tree which was this ancestor's *segere*. There was a quarrel about the Chieftainship at Naleruk (Naleregu, near Gambaga) and these ancestors of ours, who were full brothers, left Gambaga and first settled near a place called Gos, in the Kusase country. There was nothing but thorn scrub there, so the place was named Namgoel, "the Chieftainship of thorns". We quarrelled with the Kusase and came here and gave the place its name. When we came here, we found a people who had not any Chiefs, only *Ten'danam* (*Ten'dama*). They spoke the language now called Nabte. Our people followed *Loro*, and *Zan* became the first Chief. He died and is buried here. The people whom we overtook here, we called Namnam. We became their Chiefs. We own the people, the *Ten'danam* own the land. The present *Ten'dan'* is called Biriwanab, his grove (*tengwan*) is known as Dakyirig. The *Ten'dan'* makes sacrifices to the land. *Ten'danam* are like your European doctors. *Zan* was succeeded by *Dyeten*. I think he was *Zan's* son, but it is a long time ago. Each Chief when he dies has a stone which is bathed, rubbed over with shea butter, and kept in the compound of the new Chief in a room. These stones are called *kɛwim kuga* (spirit-stones). A sacrifice is made once a year to them. *Dyeten* was succeeded by *Pubuge*. During his time, we heard that the black gun-men (Ashanti?) came with war and reached Akorog (lit. the River). We met them with arrows and had many men taken captive.

'Any one who fights with guns we call *Kambonse*. *Pubuge* was succeeded by *Isaka*—we Dagomba were accustomed to give such Mohammedan names to our children. No European had as yet come to our country. We kept in touch with Naleregu, and our Chiefs receive the red fez from Naleregu to this day. *Isaka* was succeeded by *Konteem* (Fail-to-think). He was succeeded by *Bazirene* (They-do-not know that). He was succeeded by *Lamsin*, *Dayi*, *Kapeon*, *Too*, *Telazoo* (Palavers-in-plenty), *Zure*, and *Nwena*. In his (*Nwena's*) time, the white man came; we fired at them with arrows as they passed. *Nwena* was succeeded by *Ti* (Tree); a tree was his *segere*. During his time, the Europeans asked him to make a road between Navaro and Bawku, but he refused. *Ti* was killed by his own people, because they thought he was conspiring with the Europeans. I myself, *Zuru II*, ran to Bawku and thence to Gambaga and came with Captain Welim (Wheeler?) and we fought and many people were killed; after which peace came.

'Our ancestors were Dagomba,<sup>1</sup> now we are all Namnam. We marry with Kusase, Gruse, Talense. We formerly circumcised.<sup>2</sup> Our ancestors had no marks, but now we tattoo like the Nankanse. I was cut at Do, near Bono. Namnam women have a special marking called *ta velim* (lit. fine marks), running from the nose across the cheeks and round the neck ending on the shoulders.'

*Clans*: 'The clan (*bura*) of Chiefs is the big-snake clan, *Wa'tetaam* (python). All the fifteen Chiefs who preceded me were of this clan. A python once showed an ancestor where to get water. The people have their own clans.'<sup>3</sup>

*Namnam Towns under Nangode*: Nangoot (where the head Chief lives), Peluno, Damologo, Tendono, Logode, Dagelega, Zanoleregu, Son, Dakyigu, Mosi, Kono, Dobila, Sapare, Dasablego, Gono, Zoga, Yokote, Nyoboka.<sup>4</sup> Each of these towns is known as a *teya*.

*Constitution of Namnam Teya*: Each *teya* is divided into a number of *yi zut* (sing. *yi zugo*) sections; each section is under a *yi-zu-kpwema* (Elder of a section); all the sections are under one *Kambon-nab* appointed by the head Chief. The head Chief, an exceptionally fine

<sup>1</sup> He does not make any distinction between Mampruse and Dagomba.

<sup>2</sup> The Namnam women have the clitoris removed at the age of puberty.

<sup>3</sup> I, unfortunately, went down with fever and had to cut short my stay with the Namnam before I had made a record of these.

<sup>4</sup> Datoko, Namoo, Sakote, and Dusi are Namnam settlements, but not under the Chief of Nangode.

and intelligent man (see Fig. 79), informed me this was the constitution long before the Europeans came. 'A *Kambon-nab*', he said, 'is succeeded by any one who asks for the post, but if there are many applicants, the wishes of the people of the *teya* were taken into consideration.'

*Tribute*: The head Chief stated that he received yearly tribute of corn, ground-nuts, and beans, and that friends for whom he settled cases would 'thank him with a sheep'. He also received presents from the *teya* heads, whose appointment lay with him.

'When a beast is killed in hunting, the whole beast is given to the section-head of the hunter who killed it. He, in turn, sends a hind leg to the *Kambon-naba*, who sends it to the Chief, who shares it with the *Kambornanram*.'

*Work of Section-heads: Ten'dan': The Territorial Ruler*: 'The section-heads settled adultery cases. If blood were shed on the land or anyone was killed, or if rain did not fall, a cow or sheep or goat was given by the Chief to the *Ten'dan'* to sacrifice and purify the land. Now-a-days most Chiefs do not do so. Before you Europeans came, we Chiefs recognized the *Ten'dan'*. The reason others do not do so now is, that since Europeans came, many new Chiefs have been made, who know nothing about Chieftainship and only want to look after their own bellies. I myself have continued the old things. After the sowing we collect things and give to him (the *Ten'dan'*) to sacrifice. I have not, like most Chiefs, taken away the *dawa dawa* trees from the *Ten'dan'*; when I am in need of some, I buy what I require. Formerly Chiefs ate out of calabashes, now they try to eat out of a basket.'

Heads of sections, of whom there are four at Nangoot (in charge of the sections known as *Zod'bis*, *Beam-bis*, *Isaka bis*, and *Kpea-bis*),<sup>1</sup> report to the *Kambon-naba*, who in turn report to the Chief.

The Chief of Nangode, with whom I was very much impressed, informed me that he had continued the old system of Native Administration, although 'few other Chiefs now do so, which causes the spirits in the groves to lament'.

*The Ten'dan'*: The following was told me by the *Ten'dan'* of Nangode (see Fig. 80): 'My ancestor owned the land. I was head *Ten'dan'* (*Ten'dan' kpxem*). The Europeans have given power to the Chiefs, who now own the land. My ancestors owned *dawa dawa* trees, and lost beasts, and when men shot arrows and killed any one, a cow was given to purify the land. When some one wanted to build a new house,

<sup>1</sup> *Bis*—children, i.e. descendants.

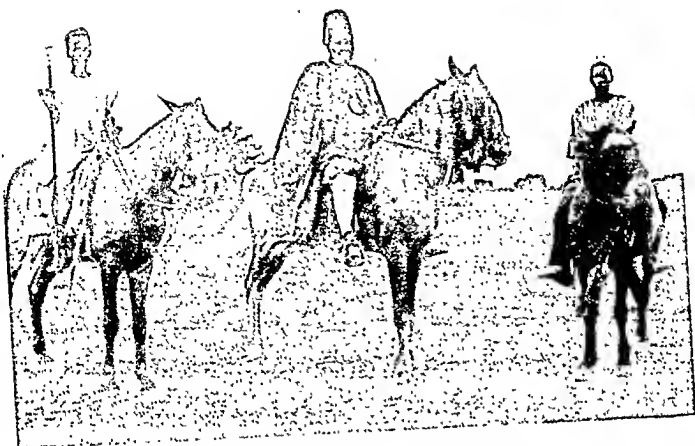


FIG. 79. The Chief of the Namnam



FIG. 80. A Namnam *Ten'dan'*

he would ask the *Ten'dan'* and be given a place to build, or a place to farm. After the harvest of the early millet, they would send millet to give "water" to the groves, and so too, after the corn harvest. If blood came from any one, except from the nose, and fell upon the land, the *Ten'dan'* had to purify it. If Chiefs sold any man in exchange for cattle, the *Ten'dan'* was given one to give to the land, but when people were sold in a time of famine in exchange for food it was not customary to give anything, but the land would be angry and kill a member of that family who had sold their kinsman, even (extending its vengeance) to a member of their daughter's family who had married far away. The land is a female and "above" is a male. When I sacrifice I call upon my father to "reach" his father who will "reach" the grove. Birth, crops, the getting of wives, good sleep, depend upon the land, who tells *Wen* (God). When two people were about to fight, and the *Ten'dan'* went to stop them, he would lay down his staff between them and no man might shoot arrows over that. The staff is a corn stalk. Any one who disregarded that would die. *Tobeg'* and *taku'* have not anything to do with the *Ten'dan'*.

*The Position of the Ten'dan' in Cases of Adultery, Theft, Murder, and Suicide.*

*Adultery:* 'The head of the section settled such cases; it was not formerly a Chief's concern.'

*Theft:* 'In case of theft, the thief, if caught, would be taken to the one who "owned" (i.e. was responsible for) him, who would settle the matter. If the parties could not agree, the matter was taken to the head of the section, who would take it if necessary to the Chief. Since Europeans came we have the *Kambon-nab'*.'<sup>2</sup>

*Murder:* 'If a man from Nangoot was killed (murdered?) by a man from (say) Pelino, and the slayer was caught, he would be killed by those who chased him. Afterwards, the Pelino people would bring cows, and the people of Nangoot also, and give to the Chief who would then give some to the *Ten'dan'*, keeping the remainder to purify his skins. There is a hole below the skin on which a Chief sits for the blood to flow. The family who had had a member murdered did not receive anything. The Pelino people and the Nangoot people concerned would mix the flour and water which each will bring and make peace. Were the Pelino man, in such a case, to escape, and if the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXVIII.

<sup>2</sup> According to the Chief, these officials were part of the old administration.



Nangoot people wished to make war on them, the *Ten'dan'* would stop them. The murderer will thus escape. The head Chief had not any power to tell the *Kambon-nab'* of the murderer's *teya* to hand him over, but he would bring cows and purify the land.

'When murderer and murdered man were from the same *teya* or same section, the murderer was not tried or killed, but he would have to leave the town. If he remained behind, and heard the funeral custom of his victim, or if he ate any food or drank any water in which the dead man's cloth had been dipped, he would die. His family would bring a cow, sheep, and goat to the Chief. The cow was handed to the *Ten'dan'*, who gave it to the land, saying, "A young rascal has destroyed, and they have brought their gifts, that I may receive and give you, that you may hide the sin, and that people may sleep (lit. that sleep may sleep), the corn bloom, child-bearing continue, and marriages be celebrated".

'A *Ten'dan'* was not allowed to ask the land to punish any one.<sup>1</sup> He could not do so; the land must not hate anyone, but love all men alike, even murderers. The murderer would leave with his wife and family and never return. He might go to his in-laws; if he were ever to return, he would die, the *tobog'* of the murdered man would kill him.'<sup>2</sup>

*Suicide (Ko-fo-meya)*: "The family of the suicide took a cow, a sheep, and a goat and handed them to the Chief, who gave the cow to the *Ten'dan'* for the land. He sacrificed it, saying: "A man has made heart (i.e. got angry) and killed himself; that is finished, but a wife remains, a boy remains, let them sleep well; do not let this same thing return". A suicide had already spoken before birth; he had made a vow, he would die as a man, *buda kum*.'<sup>3</sup>

All important matters were discussed by the Chief, *Ten'dan'*, and section-heads.

*Succession to Ten'dan'*: 'When a *Ten'dan'* died, and while his funeral custom was being made, they called a *bay* (soothsayer), meeting at the *zoy* hut, outside the compound, and, in the presence of the Elders, but not of the Chief, consulted and selected a new *Ten'dan'*. Any one might become *Ten'dan'* except any member of the Chief's family. A brother might succeed a brother.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> But see p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> There seems here a clear distinction between murdering or killing a clansman and a stranger.

<sup>3</sup> A natural death is often known as *bum pok kum* (a woman's death).

<sup>4</sup> This is not so among the Nankanse.

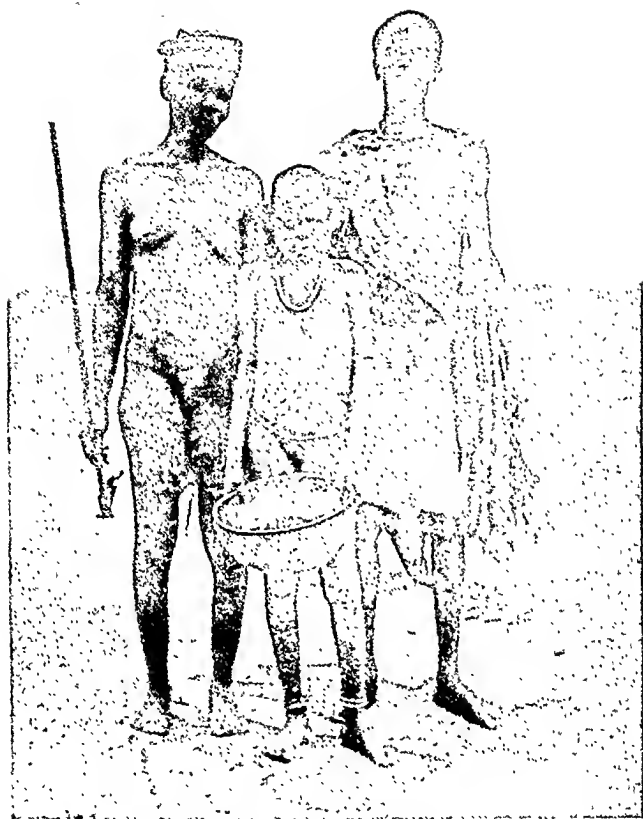


FIG. 81. A female *Ten'dan'* and attendants

*Woman Ten'dan'*: 'A woman might become a *Ten'dan'*. She has the right to offer sacrifices, and receive lost things. She sits down saying: "Land receive your water and all your things". After she has said so, a man cuts the throat of the offering. She has a calabash, not a string hat. She owns the land and can stop wars with the corn stalk.' (A female *Ten'dan'* is interviewed later.)

*Rain-makers*: 'A rain-maker is separate from a *Ten'dan'*. He is called *Sa-ran*. We have none here.'

*Ten'dan' and Funeral Customs*: 'The family of the deceased would "reach" the *Ten'dan'* and he would give them a place to make a grave; were he to refuse they could not bury him. The *Ten'dan'* would send the boy to mark out the grave, making a circle with a calabash and the pointed stick used for digging the grave. He will say:

'*Dakirig* (a grove) some one is dead, can I refuse to bury him, therefore may you hear, and let the "room" be a proper one that he may sleep well?' A sheep is then sacrificed near the grave.

*Graves*: The Namnam bury their dead outside, not in, the compound. As many as twenty corpses may be in one grave. Men and women are buried in the same grave. The graves are circular with a bottle-neck. A boy or girl who has not any *nyere*<sup>1</sup> must have a separate grave.

A man does not have sexual intercourse with his wife for three years after she bears a child, i.e. if the child lives.

*Female Ten'dan' (Ten'dan' poka)*: Akayiri, a female *Ten'dan'*, who may be seen in Fig. 81, told me the following:

'My ancestress was a *Ten'dan' poka* (a female *Ten'dan'*), called Banams. My grove is called Tinkyena; it is always a female *Ten'dan'* who is in charge of it. The calabash, which the little girl who always accompanies me carries, and my uncut hair, are the signs of my office. I own the land at Zoga. If the Zoga men want to fight, I will go between them, and place a corn stalk on the ground. Zoga has two *Ten'dan'*, a male and a female, but I own the land, as is proved by the fact that mine is the hind leg of all sacrifices; the male only gets a fore-leg. Because "a female may kill a snake, but only a male cut off its head" (*poka ka kure wafo nwa zugo*), therefore, when I have given the sacrifice, the male cuts its throat. This male has no hat or skin. When I say that the land at Zogo belongs to me, I mean it belongs to the spirits. I am their servant. A male *Ten'dan'* may have a wife, but a

<sup>1</sup> See p. 8. This only applies to a child whose mother is still young enough to bear children.

female one may not marry or even have a lover. When a woman is chosen as *Ten'dan' poka*, she will leave husband and children and go to Zoka to enter on her work, and the cows which her husband paid for her will not be claimed, as his wife has been chosen by the land, and if her husband claimed back the cows, he would die. I myself left home just a year ago.' The Chief, who was present when this woman was speaking, said, 'We caught her and put the calabash and stalk in her hand, without telling her; she could not refuse; it was the word of our *Taba* (ancestor). Her predecessor was my own wife; she was taken from me.'

She continued: 'Female *Ten'dan'* are chosen from one family; my clan is *loa* (a red squirrel?)'.

This woman's small girl attendant told me she would be the *Ten'dan's* servant until she reached puberty and married, when another young girl would replace her.

I again asked the female *Ten'dan'*, if *Ten'dan'* owned the land. She said, 'No, not really, the grove does, *Ten'dan'* are only children of the *tengwan* (grove)'.

#### *Some Further Notes regarding Ten'dan' and the Land:*

'In olden times, the *Ten'dan'* gave the Chief land to farm as well as lesser people. He, the *Ten'dan'*, would point out the place to make the farm and call the name of his grove, saying, "So-and-so wants to eat, help him". The *Ten'dan'* will turn over the first sod, and at that place, *kyili* seed will be planted, the leaves of which are called *bito*. When this farm bears its first crops, and thereafter each year, a basket of corn, a pot of beer, and some fowls are given to the *Ten'dan'* by its owner. As soon as land is totally abandoned, it reverts to the *Ten'dan'*, but as long as it is being cultivated, he cannot take it back, unless its owner offends. The *Ten'dan'* may give land to a stranger provided he lives in the *teya*. Before a smith used iron from the land, he would make a knife, an axe, and a nail called *pin kpa*,<sup>1</sup> and give them to the *Ten'dan'* before doing any work for others.'

*The Godan:* 'I am called *Ten'dan'*, there is one called *Godan* who wanders and kills meat. His work is to take people to the bush to hunt. When a beast is killed, he receives a foreleg; the remainder goes to the head of the section. The *Godan* "owns" the men whom he takes to the bush to hunt; he does not own any land. If one of my own section

<sup>1</sup> Used by leather workers.

kills a beast, I receive some, not otherwise. I own the land in the bush, not so the *Godan*.

'Things found on the land, except beads, belong to the *Ten'dan*', also lost fowls, iron, worked or unworked, goats, sheep, and cows. A horse or a donkey goes to the Chief; these are not permitted to enter my kraal. If any one found these things and kept them, his home would break. The finder of beads, guinea-fowls, a cloth, cowries, may keep them if not claimed, but if the cowries<sup>1</sup> were many, he would give some to the Chief and to the *Ten'dan*'. A lost child belongs to the Chief; it is forbidden for a *Ten'dan* to take such a one, she may not eat anything with hairs (i.e. a person).'

*Tattooing*: A *Ten'dan* must not have tattoo marks, but markings called *Taavelem* do not matter.<sup>2</sup>

*Harvest Festivals*: 'Beans, ground-nuts, and new crops must first be given to the groves, after which every one may eat. Only naked people may go to the groves. A *Ten'dan* has to be so careful not to eat new crops before the groves have done so, that, when the corn is ripening, his water-pots have to be covered over to prevent any grain from being blown into them.' He concluded the above by stating: 'Our ancestors did not come from any other place. *Na Wen* (God) created our *Taba* and allowed him to be on the land. No stranger can possess *ten-kur* (land stones).<sup>3</sup> Formerly we called our land Zug, and there were only thorns upon it. Then the Dagbama (Dagomba) came and ate the Chieftainship and called the land Gohe-nam or Nangoot. Our mother's children are the *Ten'dan* of Pals (near Zuarono). They went there from this place. Our taboo is red clay; we do not use it for plastering the walls of compounds.'<sup>4</sup>

A rapid survey of other matters, fully described in previous chapters, revealed everywhere a uniform similarity in customs and beliefs with those of their neighbours. A more intensive investigation will no doubt reveal differences in detail here and there, but the task of recording these I must leave to others and pass on to examine the next tribe, the Kusase.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 378.

<sup>2</sup> This prohibition was, I was informed, only local.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 256.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 6, p. 244.

## THE KUSASE

*Tribal and Clan Organization. The Tenedan'*

THE Kusase are a large tribe, numbering over 40,000, which inhabits the extreme north-eastern corner of the Northern Territories. They also extend across the border into the mandated territory of Togoland. The people call themselves *Kusase*, singular *Kusa*, and their language *Kusal*.<sup>1</sup> Specimens of this dialect have been given in previous chapters. They do not apply the name Gurense to themselves as do the Nankanse.

*Clans:* The word used in the vernacular is *budi*. A son acquires the clan of his father. Here, for the first time, we encounter a departure from the more common practice of using the totem name to designate the clan. A Kusa, if asked his clan, will give the name, not of its totem, but of the male ancestor from whom all his fellow-clansmen trace descent. On inquiring further, he will then state what is his clan taboo. This departure from the usual practice will also be noted later on among the Lobi. Here again, we find particular clans grouped in certain towns, town again having the meaning of 'area' or 'settlement' rather than township in the commonly accepted sense. The following table illustrates the above.

<i>Town.</i>	<i>Clan.</i>	<i>Clan Taboo.</i>
Gagbir. <sup>2</sup>	Zuos.	<i>Waf tetar</i> (lit. bigsnake i.e. python).
Garu.	Nabt.	<i>Sur.</i> (The heart of any animal).
Kugri.	Nabt.	<i>Sur.</i> (The heart of any animal).
Timpale.	Nabt.	<i>Tunig</i> (a kind of fish with sharp teeth).
Pusig.	Zuos.	Python.

The towns of Bindur, Bugur, Zabuk, Timpan, Bawk' also contain a number of Zuos clansmen. Bawk (Bawku)<sup>3</sup> are really Mampruse, not

<sup>1</sup> Kusal is so much like Mole that an officer learned the former language by mistake for the latter and was duly examined by a language board and passed, much to the amusement of critics of the said board. They had, however, every excuse for doing so, the laugh really being against those who, because these languages had different names, thought they were not related. Curiously enough, however, Kusase and Moshi do not intermarry (see p. 390).

<sup>2</sup> *Anglice* Kagbiri.

<sup>3</sup> The *Tenedan'* is, however, a Zuos.

Kusase, being founded by the ruling class. Timoni, another settlement, now included among and talking Kusal, are really Buls' (Builsa).

My informants stated that the Nabt of Kugri, who taboo the heart of an animal, and the Nabt of Timpale, who taboo a fish, formerly did not intermarry but now do so. I was also informed that at Pusig' there is a clan (?) called Narem whose totem is *naf zur* (a cow tail), but that these people, though now talking Kusal, were formerly Bimoba.

From the above it would appear that we had here among the Kusase, two endogamous clans, Zuos and Nabt, a third having been lately added by the breaking away of a branch of the former which had acquired a sub-totem, i.e. the fish, while other clans which may be found in this area are those introduced by the influx of other tribes, Bimoba, Builsa, and Mampruse. In other words, there are signs of the dual organization having existed there. Proof of this supposition must, however, await a fuller and more minute investigation. A parallel to this will, as we shall see later, be found among a neighbouring tribe, the Tampolense (see Chapter LVI).

The blood-related kindred-groups found among the Nankanse, &c., also exist here, being known as *sog*. Again we find the taint of witchcraft transmitted only down this line. 'If your mother "cannot see", if your mother is "blind", all her descendants through the female line are also blind. This relationship is called *sog*. *Sœ* is a witch. To "see" is a bad thing. In old days if we found a witch we wanted to tie him up and beat him until he died. You cannot leave a person who is eating people; he will spoil the world. As the Elders sit and converse at night, they will see a fire flickering *ta ta ta* at some compound, and when some one dies, the *baa* (soothsayer) will find out that there is a witch in that compound. Many people can "see" but do not eat people. The children of witches are the beautiful women whom men love the most. In olden times when a witch killed your child or "brother" you would want to kill him, but others would beg you to forgive him.'

*Traditions of the Kusase:* 'When the Mampruse came from Gambaga, they found us here. In old days we only knew *Tenedan'* and had no *Na* (Territorial Ruler). We have always been here. Even when we move about in the locality and overtake some other people, we sacrifice to the land. *Tenedan' da moro ti* (the *Tenedan'* had us), we did not know what is now called *Nam* (Chieftainship). When anything happened, we all met and gave him (the *Tenedan'*) things to sacrifice and thus gained life and grain. The *Tenedan'* had power; when any one refused to obey him he would strike the land (*nwe tey*) and that person would

die. He would tap the land with his fingers and say, "*Tey ya be, zagala saam ka nees tey la okom*" (If such a thing as the land really is, (here is) So-and-so who has offended and treated you as of no account, may you kill him).<sup>1</sup> The land will break his compound; his fowls, goats, sheep, children, wives will die. The offender would approach an Elder and "beat his hands" and ask him to intercede with the *Tenedan'* on his behalf. Chiefs now own the people, but *Tenedan'* still own the land. The first Chief of Kagbiri was my father. He was *Tenedan'* at the time when the Germans made him Chief. The present Chief is Ati, he is my father's child (i.e. son of the speaker's father's brother). My father, after the Germans made him Chief, used to delegate the work of *Tenedan'* to me, so when he died and Ati was made Chief we continued to do the same.'

At this place (Kagbiri) so far as I could see, we find the Territorial Ruler (who is not a foreigner, but one of the family of the former *Tenedan'*), and the *Tenedan'*, 'his brother', working in complete harmony. The Germans, it will be noted, whether by accident or design, had made the *Tenedan'* also the Territorial Ruler. The significance of the rather curious and suggestive procedure—which I have also noted elsewhere—whereby a *Tenedan'* who, by chance, has become Chief, delegates the religious part of his duties to another, should not be overlooked. The multifarious administrative and executive duties, which the Territorial Ruler is asked by us to undertake, cannot be wholly responsible for this. This may be proved by an examination of the position of a Chief in Ashanti, where these two functions—religious and secular—are combined in one person. Perhaps the bad example set by the majority of foreign Chiefs in these parts, who were always unconcerned with local land-gods, may partly account for this. On the other hand, it must not be overlooked, that by far the most important religious duties performed by Ashanti Chiefs for their people are the ceremonies in connexion with their own ancestral spirits, in which their subjects now join, and not those rites in connexion with the land, which has tended to become alienated, although theoretically they still belong to the Stool. Many Northern Territory Rulers, while ignoring land gods, would, nevertheless, lay claim to the land. The following are some further notes on the duties and privileges of the *Tenedan'* among the Kusase.

'When the rain does not fall, the Elders consult the soothsayer and report to the *Tenedan'* what the *kaa* (soothsayer) has told them. The

<sup>1</sup> Compare p. 370.



*Tenedan'* will tell the land that if she permits the sowing, and good crops result, that he will give her a beast and beer. After a good harvest, each of the Elders will catch a fowl and take grain for beer, and the *Tenedan'* will take the beast and go to the *tengban* (grove) where the vow (lit. mouth) was made, and make the sacrifice. If a *Tenedan'* is very old, his son may do this for him. The sacrifice is made on a stone at the foot of a tree. This stone will receive it and give to the land. The land is not a human spirit.' The *Tenedan'* will say:

"We asked you to help us to eat. Now we are eating, we cannot refuse you yours, receive this beer." We pour out the beer and then kill the fowls and goats. Sometimes the land will ask for a cow (through the soothsayer). The *Tenedan'* will then ask every one to give him some grain, and when he has enough, he will exchange this for a cow. Every one in the *teya* will eat some of the meat. The *Tenedan'* will take one hind leg, the head, and the skin. Women and children too will have some. Any one who hates the *Tenedan'* and eats of this sacrifice will die. The *Tenedan'* and the *Tey-kpeem* (Elders of the *teya*) always discussed town affairs together.'

*Succession to the Tenedan's ship:* 'When a *Tenedan'* dies, his next eldest brother succeeds. If he has no brothers, then, his eldest "son"; that means the eldest of all the "sons" among the *Tenedan'* and his brothers. In some towns, a man who has a brother may not become a *Tenedan'*, but it is not so among the Kusase. A *Tenedan'* had power to drive a man out of the *teya*. A wise man would listen and go, but a fool would remain until he lost everything.'

*Tenedan' and the Land:* 'A *Tenedan'* is in charge of all uncultivated land. Any one who wishes to cultivate there will tell the *Tenedan'*, saying, "*Seare* (uncultivated ground) (Nankane, *seka*) lies there and I wish to make a farm upon it". The *Tenedan'* will send a boy to look at the place and show the man the boundaries. The man will turn up the soil a few times in the presence of this messenger. After the farmer has worked on this land for some time, he will brew beer, and take a fowl and give to the *Tenedan'* to sacrifice to the land. This he will do in his own compound, giving it to his father's *bagr* (shrine) to give to the land, saying: "Father, receive this fowl and beer; somebody has seen some uncultivated land, which he wishes to farm; he has brought this fowl and beer; receive it and give to your father to give to the land that the farmer may get crops". The remainder of the beer is for those who are helping him to clear the land and the *Tenedan'* will also send his son to pour some on the land and say:

“Land, receive your beer and drink; a person wishes to farm. Permit the workers to rise up from their labours without headache and belly-ache.”

‘When the farmer gets each new crop, he gives the *Tenedan*’ a large bundle of grain, and from time to time a large pot of beer and a guinea-fowl, that is, if his belly has been washed (if he is happy). If this farmer later leaves the land even for many years, it still belongs to him, and when he dies, that place is for his “sons”, but if he gives it up entirely, and some one else wants it, the *Tenedan*’ will first direct him to that man or to his family. The *Tenedan*’ still “owns” the land which he has given away, because anything that is found on it still belongs to him. He, the farmer, owns the *kobo* (the right to cultivate) but he could never sell it. In olden days *dawa dawa* trees belonged to the *Tenedan*’, even if growing on a man’s land, and no one dared to pick the fruit, even in the uncultivated bush, but when the tree was growing on a man’s own *saman* (farm near his compound), the *Tenedan*’ would share the fruit with him. Shea butter trees in the bush belonged to all the town; those on family farms to that family, those on a privately owned farm to the owner of that plot. The reason that *dawa dawa* trees belonged to the *Tenedan*’ is because these trees grow up owing to some one having eaten the seed and passed it in his excrement.’

*Lost Animals*: ‘Lost fowls, sheep, goats, cows, belonged to the *Tenedan*’. I here asked about treasure trove in the form of cowries. Expressions of horror were manifested at the idea of the finder taking these. ‘No one would touch such a find; the finder would cover them up and not even let any one know; they belong to the land and the spirits.’

‘In the case of beads, a *baa* (soothsayer) will probably tell the finder that they are “*Wer*” (God) and he will keep them. Any one found on the land, who had no master, belonged to the *Tenedan*’. He was a *Ten-pin* (a gift from the land). Dead elephants or antelope if it were not known who had killed them, belonged to the *Tenedan*’; if known who had wounded them, the *Tenedan*’ only received a hind leg.’

*Go-dan*: ‘We used to have a *go-dan*; he was one who had once lost a relative in the bush and when the seasonal hunting parties go hunting he is in charge of them, and receives a foreleg of each animal killed. He is really running after his lost brother, and the others are helping him. The *go-dan* would give the *Tenedan*’ two forelegs, after the hunting, and some fowls before the hunting begins. The *go-dan* does

not own the land, but is in charge of the hunting party for the time that they are away in the bush.

'The *Tenedan*' would separate people fighting by spreading ashes on the land between the combatants; no man may shoot an arrow over this line. It is taboo to the land to have sexual intercourse in the bush. Any one who found people doing so will collect a heap of leaves and branches at that spot, and every one who passed there must add more. Such a place is called *pey bak* (vagina hole).

'A woman may not become a *Tenedan*.'<sup>1</sup> *Tenedan*' have not any distinctive dress from that of any Elder. There is no difference between the funeral custom for a *Tenedan*' and that of an Elder.'

<sup>1</sup> But see p. 371.

THE KUSASE (*continued*)*The Family Compound (Yir) and the Shrines (Bagr)  
which it contains*

KUSASE compounds (*Yā*, s. *Yir*) are roughly circular in shape, as are the huts which they contain, and are widely scattered like those of the Nankanse, Namnam, Talense, and Kasena, but there is one marked difference which immediately strikes the eye between the Kusase house and those already described. The former are not flat-roofed, but are neatly thatched (see Fig. 86). I now propose to describe a typical Kusase compound in detail. The main entrance which faces west is known as *zan pak nore* (compare Nankane *zenore*). It leads directly into the main yard which is also the cattle-kraal. The hut immediately on the left of the main entrance (it is sometimes on the right) is called *zɔɔ*, pl. *zon*. This hut is nominally where goats and fowls are shut up at night, but it is also used in the wet season as the place where the senior males in the compound sit and talk. When the head of a compound dies, his body is passed through a back doorway in the *zɔɔ* hut, instead of being taken through the main entrance. The *zɔɔ* (or *zɔɔo*) hut seems to figure largely on many such ceremonial occasions. Immediately outside the entrance of the compound is a grass-roofed hut without any walls, known as *suk* in Kusal (*Paka* in Nankane). It contains a shrine called a *W'en bagr* (God's shrine), a circular mound like that seen in Fig. 142 at Tumu among the Isala. Let into the top of this mound is a sheep's horn and a stone. The stone is called *bagr bugr* (the *bugr* of the *baga*). The head of the compound and others sit or recline on this flat top, and in the very hot weather the compound head may sleep on it. It is sacrificed to at the sowing season, at the harvest, and when new beer is made from the first of the crops. 'The *Tenedan*' sacrifices to the land, I, the Chief, sacrifice on this *bagr*.'

Above the doorway of the *zɔɔ* hut, through which the corpse of the head of the house is carried to burial, is a black cross (see Fig. 87) to guard against lightning.<sup>1</sup> The same symbol is put on trees in Kusase farms under which the farmer shelters, and for the same reason. At

<sup>1</sup> The same symbol is used among the Isala to protect crops from menstruating women.

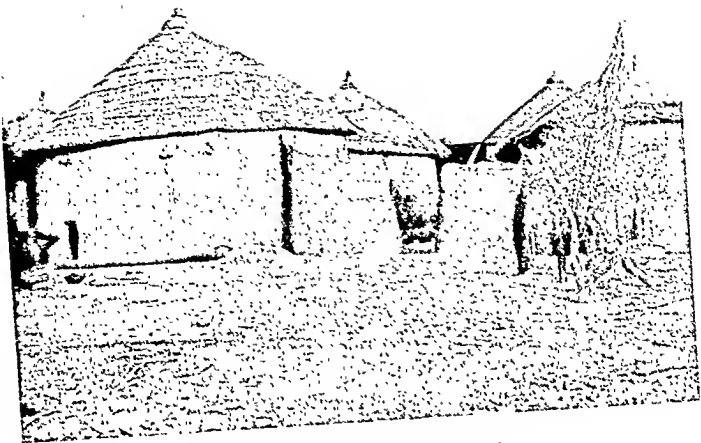


FIG. 86. A Kusase compound

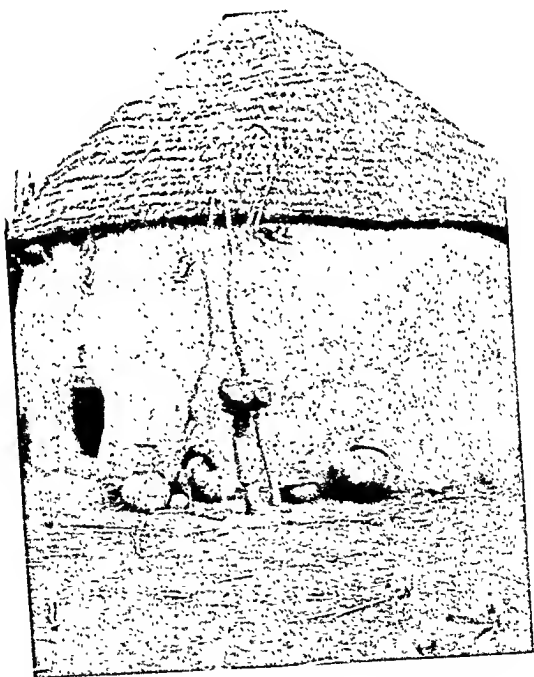


FIG. 87. The zzy hut. Note cross above doorway

the doorway of the *zɔy* hut stands a post with a large stone on top, and a long stick, bent in the shape of a butterfly net and bound round with leaves. 'I tie up the lightning with this', said my informant. On the ground near the stick is a pot containing 'roots' in a decoction in which the inmates of the compound bathe. 'I also use this *sa-bagr* (lightning shrine) to bring rain, only the lightning I tie.'

All the above may be seen in Fig. 87. On the left of this doorway is a shrine (*ba bagr*) of the spirit 'of the owner of the compound' (an ancestor?) with a cow horn the remains of a past sacrifice hanging on the hut wall above it. To the left of this again is another shrine, that of the 'owner's' mother. Resting on the *ba-bagr* is a pot, called a *ba' bugar*. 'This pot is the shrine of spirits once served by my father and my elder brother. I brought some earth from it (a *bagr*?) and put it in the pot, so I now say when sacrificing, "My father receive these offerings and give to your *bugr*", instead of saying, "My father receive and give to your father". I own my grandfather's *Wen* (Nankane *Yini*), it can descend (on my death) to whoever he (the spirit) names, but the spirit of our ancestor always goes to the eldest.'

Passing now through the main entrance, between two grass-roofed huts, one of which is the *zɔy*, the other called *nos dog* (fowl house), we enter the *zan-pak* (cattle-kraal). The cattle in this case were in charge of Fulani herdsmen who were paid by being given the milk. Inside this yard were two other huts, one for goats and sheep, and one for a horse. Surrounding this yard were four suites of rooms called *dog* (compare Nankane *deo*, pl. *detto*). These *dog* were those of:

- (a) *Yi-dan's* wife.
- (b) An unmarried son of the *Yi-dan*.
- (c) The wife of the *Yi-dan's* younger brother.
- (d) *Dog* of another of *Yi-dan's* wives.

Inside the main yard is a hut with two doors opposite each other called *zon-tug* (lit. pass straight through), where the women sit. The second doorway of this hut leads right into the yard (*zak*) of one of the *dog* (suites) in which is a shrine called *mej Wen* (lit. one's own God), a stone let into a circular mud mound. Beside this shrine is a pot full of roots, called *dendeuk duk* or chameleon's pot. 'I saw two chameleons one day copulating. I was told this is a forbidden thing, so I went to one who had medicine for this and he told me to bring roots. When a child is born to me, I bathe it with water from the roots. Before the *baa* (soothsayer) told me to do this, my children used to die.'

In a corner beside this *wen bay* is another lightning protector, a long stick with one end bent into a hoop, also a pot containing roots. 'When the rain does not fall, I sacrifice to it, saying, "God and the land, I want to beg water, because corn, beans, and other grain are withering." When it does rain, the person who made the sacrifice has to stand here in the rain for some time and not go into the room. The bent stick is for tying the lightning. Before this sacrifice is made, and before the rain is called, the one who is about to do so, bathes with water in which the roots in the pot are soaked.' This particular *dog*, which is that of the senior wife, contained the following huts:

- (a) A small hut for boys, sons of the *Ti-dan* called *bis dog* (boys' room).
- (b) The hut of the senior wife of the *Ti-dan*.
- (c) A kitchen (*daan*), *daana* in Nankane, unroofed, but behind it is another kitchen, roofed, used in the wet season.

Each *dog* is identical in construction; a sleeping-room, and a dry-and wet-season kitchen surrounded by its own private yard. In the centre of all these women's quarters is a square hut, called *yi-dan-dog* where the head of the compound sleeps. Joined on to the above compound, but with a separate entrance, is another compound, a replica of the first. It is that of the eldest son of the *Ti-dan*. Among the Kusase, as among the Nankanse, an eldest son may 'go out', that is go away and build a new homestead some hundred yards or more from that of his father, or he may have his home adjoining that of his parent but with a separate entrance. The son in this case had done the latter. He possessed his own *Wen bay* (*Tini* in Nankane), not a large flat-topped circular shrine like his father's, but just a small earth mound. This son's compound contained three yards, each containing one living hut and two kitchens. He had a separate grain-store independently of his father. Among the Kusase these grain-stores are not inside, but outside the compounds, differing in this respect from the Nankanse.

The *zyy* hut, already mentioned, also contained the 'medicine pot', set by his slayer, for the spirit of a man who has been murdered or killed in war. This shrine, after the death of its original owner, will be kept in the *zyy* hut (compare the Nankane *tobega*). The following is a description of this custom among the Kusase.

'When one man kills another, he has to get a *yur* (pot). This pot he will "set" and bathe with the medicine which it contains for

three days. At the end of that time, he will bury the "roots" which the pot contains. Beer is then prepared and more roots sought for, and two pots. A dog and a red cock are sacrificed on one pot; a goat and a white cock on the other. Water, in which the roots have been soaked, is used for making *sagbo* (porridge) in which the livers of the sacrifice are put. The murderer and the head of his family first take some of this food in their left hands and put it in the pots, after which they and any one else who has ever killed a man (in war or otherwise) will partake of the rest of the food. Some of the roots are burned and then powdered and put in beer, and the head of the murderer's family (if he too has ever killed any one) and the murderer drink it. A similar sacrifice is made over these pots twice a year. When the murderer dies, the two pots are placed inside the *zzy* hut, and the son of the murderer will continue to sacrifice on them, but unless he too has killed some one, he may not himself eat of these sacrifices. The following words are spoken when the sacrifice is being made:

'Medicine (*tim*) receive this offering and drive away that person (the murdered man) that he may return to his own compound.' The relations of the murderer have also to bring a goat, a cock, and beer to 'cover up the blood'. This is the work of the *Tenedan*. He will make the sacrifice and say:

'Children have done something bad (*gye*) and blood has come forth and death resulted. Receive this offering and quench this fire.' The fowl and goat are sacrificed over a hole in the ground and the feathers of the fowl and undigested food in the stomach of the goat are buried in the hole. The whole of the sacrifice must be eaten at the spot where it is made. A child's bow and arrow is broken and placed in the same hole with the words, 'This is the bow and arrow which has caused the death; we have broken it; do not permit it to come out'.

'A man is very proud to have killed another in war, but not to have murdered one.'



THE KUSASE (*continued*)*Property and Inheritance. Rites de Passage*

IF the heir, who is the deceased's next eldest brother, is a *mej dan pud sob* (a greedy person) he will come, almost immediately, after the final funeral custom, to see about the division of the deceased's property.<sup>1</sup> He will tell the eldest son to produce all his late father's cowries. These the heir shares out among the sons, giving the eldest son most, because he is the one who will sacrifice to his father. The heir also takes some, but less than he gives to the eldest son. The eldest son accounts to the heir for all the cattle, sheep, horses, goats, donkeys, fowls, and guinea-fowls, which had belonged to the deceased, but once having done so, these remain under the care of the son, the heir drawing on them from time to time when he needs any. Though these remain in charge of the son, he has not any right to sell or lend any of them, and if asked to do so, he will say, "No, they belong to my 'father'". The heir has already become head of his own compound, so he does not inherit the compound of the deceased. The deceased's eldest son will return to it and all his younger brothers who are married will quit, leaving only his unmarried brothers.'

*Inheritance of Farms:* 'The eldest son of the deceased takes the *saman* farm (near the compound), and his brothers who are "going out" take the *put* (bush farms). The heir has his own *saman* and does not take any farm of the deceased. Standing crops and crops in the grain-store are divided among those who had helped the deceased to work on his farm, but widows of the deceased who do not marry clansmen do not get any of this.'

*Clothes, Hoes, Axes, &c.:* 'The day the heir comes to see the property, he will see all these things, but will leave everything with the son.'

*Shrines:* 'The eldest son will take his father's spirit, building a *bay* (shrine) for it; the heir will take the shrine of the deceased's father to his own compound and all family ancestral shrines and family ancestral "medicine". All personal "medicine" belonging to the deceased is taken by the son.'

*The Leather Bag (Kolog):* 'This is taken by the eldest brother of the

<sup>1</sup> Among the Nankanse, the time this is done is from two to five months after the final funeral.

deceased's senior wife (the eldest son's maternal uncle) because a man's senior wife owns the compound and has all the work of building it up. During a man's lifetime, the eldest son may not look into his father's bag or into his grain-store, or make use of anything personally used by his father.<sup>1</sup>

*Widows and Children:* 'Widows go to the heir, but if he does not want them, they will know this, and already have spoken to the men whom they wish to marry. Before their heads have been shaved, they must not on any account have sexual intercourse with any one. Any man who is guilty of doing so, is said "to have cut the widows' strings" (*okoa paka nwis*) and any infant whom such an adulterer looks upon will die. These widows' strings are made by an old woman who has ceased to bear children, and, after the funeral custom, she will cut them. After this they will appear in fresh leaves and people will know they are eligible to remarry. They will marry a clansman, not some one from another town. A son may not marry any of his father's widows if the father has ever had sexual intercourse with them. The deceased's brother, if not a *nyere*, may do so. The leaves which widows wear are *tangiba* leaves (shea butter leaves). If a wife ever puts these on (during his lifetime) her husband will divorce her, and claim back the cows.<sup>2</sup>

'If the widow goes outside the clan of the late husband to marry, the heir will claim from her parents the cows paid, but deducting one cow for each child borne by her. Her father in turn will recover these cows from the man whom she then marries. The children then remain with the late husband's family. Should all the cows not have been paid when the first husband died, the heir, or whichever of the clansmen take her, have to pay the balance due, otherwise no new payments are necessary. It is taboo for the heir to take for himself two widows of the same man. He chooses which he will have and gives the other to his brother, that is, if these persons want them, otherwise they may marry a clansman.' Other customs in connexion with widows and the funeral custom will be dealt with under that heading.

*Children:* 'The children of the deceased belong to his fellow clansman who marries the widow, but across the Volta, among the Kusase whom we call the people of the West (*Toondem*), children of widows belong to the ghost (i.e. the late husband). If the widow marries outside her late husband's clan, any children she had by her first husband remain the property of his clansman, i.e. of the heir.'

<sup>1</sup> Compare the Nankanse.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Nankanse custom.

*Inheritance of Wife's Property:* All the property which a wife brings with her and everything she earns later at her husband's compound by her own individual labour—by brewing beer, making baskets and pots—on her death goes to her children. If she has no children her father's family will take it, not her husband.<sup>1</sup>

*Son's Property:* His brother takes it, including any wives. A father may not take a son's widow.

### *Rites de Passage:*

*Birth:* When a woman conceives, we consult the soothsayer about it, to find out if she will be delivered easily. When she gives birth, we send a long piece of wood notched in three or four places (according to sex of child) to the woman's mother. The husband may take this himself, or, if he has other children, send it by one of them. This stick is cut through at one of the notches and used for firewood. Three or four days later, her mother will come to visit her daughter, bringing some *dawa dawa*. A woman takes care not to be confined inside a room. She will either go into the yard, or cattle-kraal, or to the *saman* farm. Leaves are spread on the ground for her to bring forth upon. The afterbirth (*zar*)<sup>2</sup> is buried in the compound farm in a pot and covered by another pot. The heads of mother and child are shaved on the day the navel string is cut. That of the child is thrown down in the fowl-house, that of the mother in the *saman* farm. The mother and child are bathed in warm water containing certain leaves. From these leaves the child gets its father's taboos. If a woman is confined in her mother's village, they would not dare to bathe the infant in their medicine. They would send a messenger to her husband, who would then dispatch some one with his medicine to treat his wife properly. Neither the father nor any other male will see the child until its navel string is healed up. When it finally drops off, it is buried where the afterbirth was put. A child is not taken outside until it becomes black, but as soon as the mother is better she may go out and fetch water as usual. Sometimes a soothsayer may say that an infant must be taken outside for the first time by such and such a person. This woman must be a *poato* (i.e. a woman born in the infant's father's town, a clanswoman). Five to six months after birth,

<sup>1</sup> Among the Nankanse, what a woman earns while living with her husband belongs to him. Her private property, however, which she brought with her, belongs to her daughter.

<sup>2</sup> In Nankane, the afterbirth of animals is called *zale*, that of human beings *yala*.

the infant will be named. A soothsayer may tell the father that a certain *W'en* (Nankane *I'in*), either his own, his father's, or grandfather's, wants the child as its *segr* (Nankane *segere*). The father will then take flour-water and a fowl and a guinea-fowl and offer them on that shrine, and after doing so, give the child some of the flour-water to drink. When sacrificing, he will speak as follows:

"Here is an infant which I have begotten; you have said you want it; do not let a hawk (a witch) catch it; guard it well; if it grows and lives and walks by itself, I will give you a beast." After the infant has been given the flour-water to drink, the mother holds it and the father will name it after the object which is the abode of the spirit in the shrine, the *baya* (bangle) or whatever it may be, the infant's hand touching this thing while he names it.

'Later, the mother of the mother of the infant will ask that her daughter and grandchild may visit them, and, if the soothsayer says that they may do so, they will go to her for from three to five months.

'A man does not cohabit with his wife for two to three years, or even more, after she has borne a child; it depends on how soon the child is walking about. A child born with any teeth was formerly killed. Twins (*Ki kiris*) which die as infants are considered to have been fairies and are buried in the bush. A dead infant is buried in an ordinary grave near a path, a piece of potsherd being placed over the ear to keep out earth, the grave being filled in and a stone put on top to mark the place. "It is buried near a path so that it may find its way back to the compound for food; if it were buried far away in the bush it would get lost." A stillborn child, if formed, is buried as described above; if not formed, it is put in a pot and buried on the kitchen midden. A woman who dies in childbirth is not given a funeral custom; she is buried in the bush in an oblong-shaped grave which is then filled in. The husband will bathe for three days with leaves and the third day will shave his head. "The reason that the woman is buried far away is because, the husband if he saw her grave would die, and if he took part in any funeral custom for her he would die."'

### *Kusase Marriage Customs:*

'If a man has already paid cows and discovers later that his wife is barren, he cannot claim them back. If, however, he has not yet paid them, he may then refuse to give them, in which case her father may take her away, but even then she may run back to her husband.'

*The Number of Cows given for Sul* (bride-price). The number varies from two to five, according to what competition there is for the girl's hand. 'When a man's wife dies, and the cows have not yet been handed over, they must be paid. If this is not done, the parents-in-law may not ask for them, but some day, when the dead woman's son is at his uncle's house to attend some ceremony, they will refuse to allow him to participate.' Again, should his mother's mother ever express the wish to have a 'room', i.e. a shrine in charge of her grandson, this shrine can only be built by his mother's brothers. They will refuse to do this and so compel the payment of the *sul*. This sanction is very typical.

The cows paid for a woman become the property of the head of her house, not necessarily of her father. I asked if her mother got any, and was greeted with faces expressing almost consternation at the very thought of such a thing. 'She has been receiving five baskets of grain all the time from her son-in-law, why should she get any of the cows, and besides if my wife dies without a son, her relatives will come and claim all her property.' He added, 'Our ancestors too did not make a good law about a man (a clansman) getting our widows for nothing and any children we had by them.' As the heir may take them, this is not really any great hardship.

A marriage may be arranged by the parents when both the children are quite young. When the boy reaches puberty, his father will tell his elder brother, who is head of the compound, that the time has come for his son to marry. The father of the girl with whom the marriage has been arranged will make beer and call the senior 'father' of the youth and they will drink together. The father of the girl will then take his daughter's hand and give her to his friend, saying, 'There is your wife'. The 'father' of the youth then returns to his town, leaving the girl behind. A few days later, the girl is sent to his town accompanied by an old woman. She stays with the bridegroom's father's senior wife. A few days later, the 'father' of the bridegroom will send a member of his section with beer and a guinea-fowl to the bride's town, not to her 'father', but to the head of the section. This beer is to inform the spirits and the living about the marriage. It is called *sindan dam* (compare *sandono* in Nankanse marriage custom). Unless the *sindan* beer is given, the marriage is not considered legal; 'a man must cook this beer'. After the bride has spent three or four days at the bridegroom's compound, the boy's real father will tell his brother that he wishes to give the girl to his son. The senior wife

of the head of the compound will, one evening, tell the bride to take fire (a faggot) to the bridegroom's hut in order that she may have light 'to sweep the floor', and she will add, 'you need not return'. Next morning people will know that the girl is So-and-so's wife. (I asked my informant if the youth for whom this marriage had been arranged knew all about it. He replied: 'The father of the youth would always be performing small services for his *dem* (in-laws), such, for example, as sending them fire-wood. The future bridegroom would be used as a messenger on such occasions and in this manner would get to know his future wife.') A man's senior 'father' is responsible for finding the cows for the bride-price (*sul*). If a man wants a second or third wife, he will help his father by giving some of his own cows, if he has got any by his own labours. 'If your father is too poor and your mother's brother is a rich man, he may pay for the cows for your wife, but that becomes a debt, for if you do not pay him back, he will claim your children after your death. You will pay him back by using the cows you receive for your own daughter.'

'A son-in-law will work on his *dem-pok's* ground-nut farm (*suma-pog*) once a year and help her in the sowing and harvest, and also assist his father-in-law in building. He will do all this until his wife bears him a child and then cease doing so, because then he will be looking out for a new wife and have then to work for these new in-laws. Every new harvest he will take new beer (*da'-palem*) and a guinea-fowl and go with his wife to visit his parents-in-law. On this occasion, the wife becomes like a man, by virtue of her husband, and gives the guinea-fowl as an offering to her father's spirit, or if he is alive, to his *Wen* (*Tini* shrine). If she were an unmarried girl at home, she could not do so. A son-in-law attends his parents-in-law's funeral, taking a sheep and goat and beer. He will also attend a brother-in-law's funeral taking a pot of beer "to pour on the grave" (*se yang*). A son-in-law will also assist in digging a parent-in-law's grave, and even sleep at his village and resume digging next morning and dig out all the stones. When we dig a grave and come down to rock, we generally place an egg there, and fill in the hole, but when a man has many sons-in-law they will dig up the rock. As long as a man's wife has not borne a child, the son-in-law must send his mother-in-law five baskets of grain each new harvest. He stops doing so when she has a child, for after that they will at once demand payment of the *sul* (bride-price).'

'A man must respect his parents-in-law; if he offends them, he

will lose his wife; they can take her from him and return him the cows.'

*Privileged Familiarity:* 'A man may play and be familiar with his sister's husband. A man can also be familiar with his grandparents, for when a man has grand-children who drag him about, he blesses the Sky-God.<sup>1</sup> We, Kusase, also "play together" (*deem taba*) with the Mampruse and the Gurense, because these tribes intermarry with us, and we have never sold each other, but the Moshi we never play with, for we used to sell them for food. The Gambaga and Bawku people, however, play with the Moshi, saying when they meet one, "Where do you come from, you worthless thing; I have heard that the Chief of your town is dead?" The Moshi will reply, "You fellow with the filed teeth, get out of my way; be off with you", and he will rush right into a man's compound as if it belonged to him.

'A man's mother's brother's daughter's husband (*daki*) may beat him in fun. A man can swear at his wife's brothers (*ti tu tab*); we curse each other.'

*Marriages Prohibited and Allowed:* 'Kusase do not marry Moshi women; they eat fowls, when they ought to eat guinea-fowls.' As long as your own wife is alive, you must not marry your wife's sister's daughter. You may marry your wife's sister while your wife is still alive, but not a *nyere*<sup>2</sup> sister. A son may not marry a father's widow, because a son sacrifices to his father's spirit.<sup>3</sup>

*Kusase Funeral Customs:* The Kusase do not bury even a *T'i-dan* (head of a compound) in a room or yard of his compound, but outside in the *saman* farm. The head of a compound is, however, given a separate and new grave (*yaog*); this is round with a circular bottle-neck mouth. The soil is not filled in. The mouth of the grave is covered with a pot and plastered over with earth (see Fig. 88).

Graves are not communal, at most two persons being buried in one grave. The second person so buried may not be,

- (a) Junior to the first.
- (b) *Nyere* to him or her.
- (c) Any wife, save the last surviving.
- (d) Two children may not be buried in the same grave 'because they would quarrel'.

A male is buried in a goat skin; a female buried naked, save for a

<sup>1</sup> A grandchild may not look into a grandparent's ears or he or she will become deaf.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> But see p. 508.



FIG. 88. Kusase graves



bing fibre girdle; children are buried naked; a person who dies of small-pox is buried in the bush in an oblong hole which is filled in.

It is taboo to allow a man to die unattended. A person about to die is supported in his brother's arms. When a man dies, the corpse is laid out on a mat and his death reported to the Elders. The corpse is bathed in cold water, and a second time with warm water. The body is then removed to the *ꞑꞑ* hut and rubbed with shea butter by the sons. In the *ꞑꞑ* hut, the corpse is dressed in a goatskin and a belt of *sug* and *bea* fibre put on it; the goatskin is passed between the legs and three cowries are placed on the pubes. It is then placed on a mat which is folded over it and the ends tied, after which it is passed out at the door, being received by sons-in-law outside who then carry it three times round the compound, if a female four times. The *bayas* (sextons) then take it from them and bury it. The body is removed from the mat; one *baya* enters the grave and the corpse is handed down to him. A male is placed on his right side, a female on her left side, in the grave. A man is buried facing the east, a female the west, because a male rises up to open up the compound, a woman at sun-down is hurrying up to wash her pots and calabashes. When a male dies, and it is possible to get the grave ready, he is buried the same day. A *Tenedan* encourages people to bury a corpse on the day of death, so that it will not be rotten and spoil the land. 'No one who has many brothers and sons can become rotten before burial.' Brothers and sons of the deceased begin to dig the grave, but as soon as the sons-in-law and brothers-in-law arrive, they take over the work. The *bayas* only walk about and superintend and say when it is deep enough. They put the body inside and close up the grave. If the deceased had 'medicine' his eldest son will take some stalks of *mus* and 'sweep' his father's body, after it has been bathed with tepid water, saying: 'My father, when you were alive, you had a thing which helped us all; it looked after our lives; you may perhaps take it away, so I am sweeping it (off you)'. He then brushes his father's body three times, and makes pretence of transferring what he has brushed from the grass brush into the pot containing the roots. Even if the deceased had an elder brother, the eldest son of the dead man will take his late father's medicine, but not any which his father had that belonged to *his* father; that is family medicine and goes to the heir. The goat whose skin was used to dress the corpse was killed being held by three persons and knocked three times against the wall of the *ꞑꞑ* hut, its throat being then cut to the accompaniment of the words: 'Here is material

for a cloth'. When the skin is put on the corpse, the tail comes in front and the three cowries are placed on it. This gives rise to a Kusase oath *M'ba ne o ligidi ta*<sup>1</sup> (My father and his three cowries). Only the back of the goatskin is used; the flesh and the skin off the belly are cooked outside the compound and must only be partaken of by those who have lost their fathers.

When a man dies, his wife's brother will bring roots which are boiled in water in which the widows bathe for three days, and after the third day the roots are buried (by a man who has lost his wife) in the cattle-kraal, or behind the compound. Each widow is then given a fruit of the *kponkporog* palm tree, from which the contents of the shell have been removed and "medicine" from "roots" put in its place. For a month, a little of this must be put in all the food which they eat. When they see the new moon, they will put aside this fruit and begin to prepare beer for the second funeral custom which is called *ku dar*. This date will be fixed by the *kudan*—the one in charge of the funeral custom—who is the heir. The first part of the funeral is called *ku-masir*<sup>2</sup> (the wet funeral). *Ku-dar* (the second funeral) is derived from the word *dar*, to give some one permission to go off. "He (the dead) will not go until all these things have been done." A day is fixed to begin the making of the beer, called *ku-malem* or *zel* (the setting of the funeral (beer)). On that day, all the daughters of the deceased, who have married elsewhere, assemble at the compound of the deceased. Every one brings a fowl and a guinea-fowl; grain food

<sup>1</sup> The Nankanse of Winkogo and the Black and Red *Tendana* have a similar oath, i.e. *Kare perega la ligidi ita*.

<sup>2</sup> The night of the *ku-masir* custom, there is a dance at which the women choose men (*poa-leasig*). All the 'strangers' line up with the townspeople opposite them. The 'stranger' women choose from the townsmen and the townswomen from the men who are 'strangers'. A girl comes forward and touches the man of her choice with her finger. Some men will be chosen by two or three girls, another man may not be chosen at all. Such a one, *o nyu kuk* (has drunk of a bitter tree). These girls, except those who are married, pass the night with the man or men whom they have selected, sleeping on one mat with them, but they do not have sexual intercourse with each other. It would be a disgraceful thing if they did so. When I expressed scepticism as to this, I was informed that in the old days youths and maidens took great pride in resisting such temptations, and sought it rather than avoided it. The two sexes everywhere joined in games, dances, and swimming. A youth's ambition was to be renowned as a hunter, or good farmer, or wrestler. There was a firm belief that a profligate would be killed by an arrow in his first fight, or bitten by a snake. My informant said Europeans separated boys and girls in our schools and told boys not to think about women, and in consequence young boys were now always thinking about such things.

is prepared, and the eldest son will kill a sheep and make food for his father's spirit. "Next day is the *ku-dar*, but the spirit has still to get his bow and quiver. All the food he has been given, he will take to his father and then return for his bow and quiver." The spirit will make use of all these things. I sometimes dream I see my father driving the flocks before him', said my informant.

The date of the *ku-kweem* or dry funeral depends on food supplies. It may be held at once after the *ku-dar*, or a year, or even four years, later. 'The spirit must be patient about this.' A day having been settled for the *ku-kweem*, all those concerned are informed, and the day before the beer is finally ready, all the relatives, sisters and sisters' children, daughters and daughters' children, and mother's relations, assemble at the town of the deceased. New *pokor nwi* (widows' strings) are put round the waists of the widows and their heads are completely shaved. Sons-in-law will bring baskets of grain food and all the children of the deceased will also shave. Towards evening, the widows, who have not been taken by the heir, will choose new husbands, for they will have to leave the compound before the quiver is brought out. After shaving, widows are made to pass through the doorway of the main entrance to the compound. One who has been unchaste during the period of her widowhood will refuse to do so and will struggle. She will then confess the name of the adulterer. This man, when he sees he has been exposed, will run away to his in-laws and from there send a messenger to the Elders of his section begging their forgiveness. He will be told to bring a large fowl and a pot of beer to purify the land. A hole will be dug in the ground, the *Tenedan* will come and sacrifice the fowl, saying: 'Land, receive this beer, for children have sinned—a matter of a vagina—may the offence be buried'. As he says so he fills in the hole. A male relative of the adulterer and one representing the woman, sit beside the hole. They each put their mouth to the calabash of beer and drink some. A leaf has been put in the beer to represent the leaves worn by women. One man crosses his leg over the other, to symbolize sexual intercourse. The dregs of the beer and the leaf are buried in the hole. The fowl is also killed and its blood allowed to drip in the hole, into which its feathers are also put. The fowl is roasted and eaten, but not by him who brought it. The head of the compound to which the adulteress belongs, sends a fowl to the head of her section with the guilty woman. He sacrifices the fowl on his *yab bagr* (ancestral shrine) saying: 'A woman went out from her compound and they have got to bring her back, must you

allow her to return.' He cuts the fowl's throat and lets the blood drop on the shrine, and next holds the fluttering chicken against the woman's waist-strings which he cuts through. The woman then runs off to the house of the senior wife of the section-head, followed by a man with a whip; 'if he likes her, he will not flog her too severely'. There she is given new waist-strings.

The next morning, after 'the going out of the widows', one arrow out of the quiver of the deceased is given to each surviving brother. The remainder, with the quiver, are then given to the deceased's eldest son, who will divide them between his brothers and himself. If the deceased had two bows, one of these will be given to a male friend of the dead man, with whom he used to hunt. The second bow is taken to the cross-roads and cut in pieces by the heir. The leather of the quiver is stripped off, cut in pieces, and thrown away. 'The funeral custom is now ended' (*kur naya*).

*Funeral Custom of a Clanswoman who dies in her Husband's Town:* 'If my daughter falls ill, her husband will report to me or to her mother, and one of my wives will go there and stay with her. If there is not a good doctor in her town, her husband will ask me to send one. If she dies, a message is sent to me at once, when my brothers, their wives, my sons and daughter, and others from my section, will set off at once and go to her town. I do not go myself, that is forbidden, my younger brother, however, will go. They will bring back the calabash which contains the water with which the corpse was bathed. If her husband's people are few, her "brothers" will help in bathing the body, and if my daughter has not any sons-in-law to help in digging the grave, my sons, her brothers, will also assist to do so. When the body has been bathed, it is removed to the *zɔɔ* hut and rubbed with shea butter and the head shaved,<sup>1</sup> and *biug* fibre is passed between the legs. My younger brother will then take three stalks of *mwi* (rice) and brush one across her arms and say: "When you were alive, you had our taboos (*kyisug*); this you have to carry back to our fathers". He brushes the rest of the stalks down the right side, the left side, her breasts, and last of all, the back, repeating these words each time. These stalks are then placed on the calabash which contains the water in which she was bathed. The corpse is then carried out through the door of the *zɔɔ* hut and "shown" the compound four times—they do not trouble to

<sup>1</sup> That of male corpse is also shaved. When a man's wife dies, the husband and children shave at the *ku-kweem* funeral, and when a man dies, the widows and children shave their heads. The same custom prevails among the Nankanse.

carry it round. The body is carried by her sons-in-law to the grave, or if she has not any, by her husband's brothers and brothers' sons. When the grave is reached, the body is taken out of the mat; a *baya* (sexton) enters the grave and receives the body which is laid on the left side, facing west. If the husband of my daughter is a rich man, he will kill a goat for my brothers, who, when they have skinned it, may return him a hind leg. This, however, he may refuse to accept, as he may be hoping I will give him another of my daughters. He also gives them fowls and guinea-fowls, one a dead one. On the way back from the funeral custom, they will halt near our town and kill and roast and eat all these but one. This they do, because if they were to bring them home, there would not be so much for them. One guinea-fowl they bring home, also the calabash of water with which the body has been bathed. The guinea-fowl is given to the dead girl's mother and any of my unmarried daughters. The calabash containing the water is buried in the compound farm and this becomes her grave. It is buried by a *baya*. I, her father, will kill a fowl and a guinea-fowl over it. First the heads are knocked against the ground and then I cut their throats saying: "So-and-so (naming the dead woman) take your fowl and guinea-fowl; ask for a way to pass and ask blessings (*malog*) for us". This sacrifice is cooked outside the compound, and every one, even small children, may eat of it. After that no attention is given to the grave; fowls may scratch over it.'

An old woman who has had many children will have the *ku-dar* and *ku-kweem* just as a man, but a young woman will not.

When a man's wife dies, he is not allowed to have intercourse with his other wives until the final obsequies of his wife have been held. 'If he did so, any infant upon whom he looked would die.' The man would have something called *gaba* (exactly the same name and same custom is found among the Nankanse). 'If he were even to look on a calf it would die. I have not had sexual intercourse with any of my wives for over a year', said a widower to me, the final funeral custom of whose wife had not yet been held. When the time for the *ku-kweem* funeral ceremony arrives, the sisters of the dead woman will take one of the three pots used for a hearth, the dead woman's porridge stick, her old broom, a red earthen pot called *kay* (Nankane *kaleya*), her calabash spoon (*bea*), her upper grinding stone (*ni-kan*), and go with all these to the cross-roads. When they arrive there one of the women will raise the shrill *kyelij* cry of women, and those carrying these things will cast them down. When they return, they

will be given beer, and if the deceased woman had any private property, it will be taken away by her relations, but half will be given to her eldest daughter. This refers only to such property as is used by women; any live stock she may have possessed goes to her eldest son. On the day when these things are cast away at the cross-roads, her husband bathes in a decoction of roots (*pok-j-tim*)<sup>1</sup> and shaves his head. 'By doing so he removes the *deat* (uncleanliness.)' He may then resume cohabitation with his wives after the funeral guests have all scattered. A widower is made to undergo an ordeal to see if he has observed this sexual abstinence. He is made to pass through the door of the *zy* hut. If he has been guilty, he will be beaten by his brother and run away from the town until he comes and begs for forgiveness.

It is a worse offence for a widow to commit adultery before her husband's funeral custom is over, than for her to do so during his lifetime, but the latter is also an offence against the land. A husband who commits adultery with a married woman is 'not fit to descend into the valley', i.e. go to war. 'In olden days a young unmarried girl would not have sexual intercourse with any man but the one whom she was going to marry.' To have sexual intercourse with a woman at her own parents' compound is to preclude the possibility of marriage with that woman. 'Even after marriage a man may not do so, he would "spoil" his parents-in-law's compound.'

The Kusase indulge in a kind of platonic friendship between the sexes known as *saboa*. A wife, with the full knowledge and consent of her husband, has a 'lover' who does little jobs for the husband, but this is only because 'the man wishes to marry her daughter or some girl from his "lover's" section' (compare Nankane, *yi pok zabero*); he may not even sit on the same mat as his 'lover'.

Should a wife die when visiting her own parents, the funeral will be brought back to her husband's village (*ba ne mor kur na*). Her waist-strings, and a little piece of the mat on which the corpse was laid is put in her calabash and carried back to the husband's compound. These will be placed in a room until the day of the funeral, when the piece of mat is thrown away, and the waist-strings buried. If the town where she died is not far away, however, the body itself will be brought home.

*Consulting the Soothsayer after a Person's Death*: 'When a man reaches his time and dies, we do not consult, only in case of "a strong death".' Hoes, used in digging graves, have the wooden handles knocked out

<sup>1</sup> These roots are later buried on the kitchen midden (*tampur*).

and these are left on the grave. The iron heads of the hoes are washed in water containing *grunyoa* grass (*nagwa* in Nankane, used to fumigate everything which has had contact with the dead). If the deceased had a *bakolog* (soothsaying shrine) it is fumigated with the grass.

*Driving the Souls of the Living from Graves:* 'Some *bayas* (sextons) can see souls (*sir*) in graves. When they do so, they will take a potsherd and put peppers and tobacco on it and set them on fire and place them in the open grave in order that the soul may be driven out.'

This exhausts the information which I obtained while living with the Kusase,<sup>1</sup> whom I found a charming and delightful people. I pass on in my next chapter to describe the Builsa, whom Europeans know better as the 'Kanjaga'.

<sup>1</sup> The Kusase do not circumcise, nor do their women practise incision, unless influenced by Mampruse connexions, e.g. at Bawku. They file the teeth. The women pierce the lower lip only.

## THE BUILSA

*History, Tribal and Clan Organization*

THE Builsa are a large tribe, numbering (in 1921) 44,463, which makes them rank as the second largest tribal group inhabiting the Northern Territories. Their country lies to the west of the Nankanse and Talense, south of the Kasena, and east of the Dagaba. They are more generally referred to by Europeans as 'Kanjaga'. This is, however, only the name of one of the many Builsa towns or clan settlements. The singular of Builsa (which is also sometimes heard, Bulse, Buile) is Bulo (also heard Buluk); the language is called Bulea, and the tribal territory Bulugu. The Builsa are called by the Dagomba 'Gurinse' (*Anglice* Grunshi). This name the Dagomba also apply to the Nankanse, Isala, Kasena, Awuna, Talense, &c. The word Gurinse is said to mean 'the foolish ones', 'the bush men', &c. 'When the gun-men—the Ashanti—claimed tribute in slaves from the Dagomba, the latter used to raid these tribes, hence the name.' Curiously enough, if this is the origin and the correct derivation of the word, the tribes so designated do not seem to resent the unflattering appellation, in some cases actually using the name to describe themselves in preference to any other name, as for example, the Nankanse.

The language (Bulea) has been discussed in the early chapters of this volume. The so-called Builsa tribe are, I think, a hotch-potch people created by local migrations and counter-migrations and intermarriages of clans belonging to both the Moshi-speaking group and to the Kasen'-Isal-speaking group. These elements have been roughly welded into a semblance of a tribal unit by coming under the far-flung arm of the Mampruse. 'Our Chiefs were under Wale-Wale which in turn, was under Naleregu' (near Gambaga).

The principal Builsa settlements are Sandema, Kanjaga, Fimbisi, Yivase, Wiase, Gwedembibsi, Gwedema, Gyadema, Doniŋa, Sinisi, Kunkoa, Wiaya, Kadem', Bachonse, Var, Chuchuliga, Gwedemkpeo, Kategera, Kaden (only five or six compounds). Kadem', Sandema, Sinisi, Gwedema (with its offshoot Gwedembibsi), and Wiaya, are all stated to have had a common ancestor who came from Zeko. Gwedemkpeo is said to be composed of people from Tongo and Zeko (Talense and Nankanse). Kunkoa inhabitants are stated to have come





FIG. 89. Sergeant Major Solla and John Kanjaga. The latter fought at Verdun

from Du (near Wale-Wale) and Orogo (Mampruse and Nankanse). Doniṅa are offshoots of Kanjaga and Bachonse. The founder of the settlement of Kanjaga, the town whose name has been given by Europeans to the whole tribe, was according to the tradition given me, of the Kasena tribe. Many of the Builsa go annually to *Tɔy nab*, the famous god of the Talense. 'When a Bulo<sup>1</sup> dies, the *Sia* (Talense) people come and claim his sandals and any "medicine" which he had got from the god, and the son of the deceased has to continue to serve *Tɔy nab*. The *Tenyonu* (*Ten'dana*) of Gwedema and Wiay also visit *Tɔng* in connexion with crops and rain.' The above undoubtedly shows that some connexion formerly existed between these tribes, or at least between members of these tribes.

The present Territorial Chief of Kanjaga is *Anyatua*, who, according to his own statement is the eighth Chief (as distinct from *Tenyonu*). The Builsa have the same totemic organization which has been found in the tribes already investigated and possess similar blood kindred-groups which trace descent through the female line. The former they call *bur*, pl. *bura*, the latter *suok* or *ziyem* (blood) (compare Nankane *bute*, *sōō*, and *zeem*). For two persons to state they have 'one eye' (*ni-yina*) is synonymous with stating that they have the same blood (compare the Nankanse, &c.). Witchcraft, also, can only be inherited from the female side. It is not easy at the present day—largely owing to the effects of civil wars and slave-raiders—to allocate particular clans to particular towns. These are tending to become cosmopolitan. I will not therefore attempt to do so, but merely note the names of such clans as are met with. These are:

<i>Pa</i> , or <i>Paan</i> (A cricket).	<i>Gwobeag</i> (lit. Bush-dog?).
<i>Nau</i> (Crocodile).	<i>Puig</i> (Hycna).
<i>Way-kpweem</i> (Python).	<i>Gbwegen</i> (Lion).
<i>Wanu</i> (Monkey).	<i>Kirr</i> (A kind of squirrel).
<i>Feok</i> (Colobus monkey).	<i>Tunin</i> (A kind of fish?).
<i>Warek</i> (Leopard).	<i>Yogen</i> (A wild cat?).

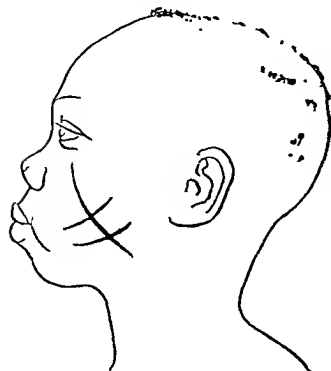
The verb to taboo is *kisi*, the noun is *kisug*, pl. *kisita*. The same reasons as are given elsewhere to account for the respect accorded to certain animals, &c. are here repeated. The clan totems assisted the clansmen's ancestors in some way or other. Sergeant-Major Solla (see Fig. 89), who belongs to the *Feok* clan, states: 'Our ancestor was

<sup>1</sup> I do not think this applies to the whole tribe.

nursed by a monkey, when he had been lost in the bush. When we die, or even before we die, our *kyik* (soul) becomes a monkey.'

*Tribal Marks:* Many of the Builsa have the following facial markings: a long cut from the nose downwards across each cheek, crossed by two shorter cuts running upwards towards the ear. Other Builsa, again,

have two long cuts from the nose downward only; others, simply the two shorter markings. Whether these marks are any real indication of tribe or clan I am doubtful.



*History of the 'town' of Kanjaga as told to me by the descendants of the original founder:* 'The name Kanjaga is derived from two words *Akana* and *jaga* or *gyaga*, to flutter like a tired bird. *Akana* was a blacksmith (*kiok*). His grandfather came from Kurugu near Dakai, in the Haut Volta. He was a Yullo (Kasena).

From Kurugu, our grandfather moved to Chakani near Po. He used to make iron hoes (*koe*) in place of the wooden ones which people then used. From Chakani he came here and built a compound on the side of the hill now known as *Kanjag' Pen*. (Kanjag' rock). Our ancestor got his name, *Akana*, in this manner. People heard him calling his wives in his language, "*Akana*", "*Akana*" (Wife! Wife!). It was a long way over the plains to his compound, and before people reached there they used to be so tired that they were rolling about (*gyaga*). Hence the name *Akangyaga* (Kanjaga).

'*Akana* bore a son called *Akalasie*, and many daughters. *Akalasie's* eldest son was called *Adabura*; his other sons were *Akabana*, *Akatoa*, *Abeler*, *Anwis*, *Akanyanna*, and *Ababiu*. These seven sons became the founders of seven sections (*kalsa*, s. *kalkalk*, *kaluk*) or *dodok* (pl. *dina*).

'*Akana* was one day taking iron stone from the side of the hill, when he heard a voice saying, "Why are you taking this stone?" He could not see any one and he knew it was a spirit. He ran home like a drunken man and sat down and his son went and consulted a soothsayer (*bano*, pl. *baneba*). The soothsayer told him to cook a fowl and take a pot, and after sacrificing the fowl, leave the pot at that spot.<sup>1</sup> *Akana* promised

<sup>1</sup> Every one making an offering to *Kanjag' Pen* must do so. See Fig. 90 which was taken at a ceremony I attended at this shrine.

a cow to the spirit if the people should come and settle here. The first strangers to do so were the ancestors of the Konyon<sup>1</sup> people—a man called Anyala and his three sons, Asami, Asekau, and Azo. Akana therefore killed the cow which he had vowed. He gave a hind leg to Akalasic and a second hind leg between Akabana and the newcomers at Konyon. Akabana said that he would not consent to share with strangers, and he refused to take part of the leg, leaving it all to the Konyon people. Later these Konyon people and the Kanjagas quarrelled, and Akabana refused to help his kinsmen. The Konyon people were eventually driven across the Sisili River. Later, civil war broke out among Akana's descendants, and the Konyon people returned, and, helped by Finbisi, Gwedema, and Donija, drove Akana's descendants away to Genisa. It was Apiu of Konyon who fought with Akan's people. He was eventually killed by the people of Dobeza and was succeeded by Abatwaa who was succeeded by Anwun. He died of small-pox and was succeeded by Acholo. He died at Navero and was succeeded by Ankanab who was succeeded by the present Chief Anyatua (Territorial Ruler). That is how the Konyon people came to Kanjaga and obtained the Chieftainship.'

*Konyon (Chief's Section) at Kanjaga:* A section is called *dodok* or *kalkalk* in Bulea, and a head of a section *dodok nu'soma* (lit. Elder of section). There are six Konyon sections:

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| (1) Nyakpere. | (4) Sikabsi. |
| (2) Samse.    | (5) Zogsa.   |
| (3) Kunyinsi. | (6) Lovaysa. |

Akan's descendants have broken up and formed into nine sections.

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| (1) Dabulse.  | (6) Gininsi. |
| (2) Belensa.  | (7) Vundama. |
| (3) Nwisdem.  | (8) Pisa.    |
| (4) Akanyase. | (9) Goso.    |
| (5) Lusa.     |              |

'At the beginning of the rains, the heads of these sections go to the *nu soma* (Elder of Lusa) and ask him to consult Kanjag' Pen about the sowing.'

*Constitution of a Builsa Town:* 'In olden times, the head of the Lusa section was also *Tenyoro*, owner of the land (*Ten'dana* in Nankane). Next came the section heads, *Nu-soma* (lit. old men); next the

<sup>1</sup> The original Konyon was between Wiaya and Kologo, now deserted and bush.

*Kambonalama*,<sup>1</sup> who led us in war; next the *Sukpa*<sup>2</sup> who was in charge of markets. The *Yallo* (pl. *Yaleba*) was in charge of hunting parties in the bush, but had not anything to do with the land (compare the *wodana* among Nankanse, &c.). The *Nanunsa nab* (Chief of the horn) was in charge of dances.'

*Succession to Section-head*: A brother succeeded; then a 'son', next a grandson. 'It may come about that the successor is not the oldest descendant. A man may have three sons who have grown up and married and had sons. These three sons may die. Their father may, very late in life, have taken a young wife, by whom he has a son. This son may be very much younger than the section-head's grandsons. The latter, however, call him "father", and he will succeed.'

*Succession to Tenyono*: 'The *Tenyono* is in charge of the groves (*tengwane*). His duties were in connexion with crops, sickness, land, and the spilling of blood. When the *Tenyono* died, and after the funeral custom, all the *nu-soma* met and appointed a new *Tenyono*. The *Tenyono*'s family would be asked by these Elders whom they wished to succeed, and, although they already knew who the successor was to be, would tell the section-heads that the choice lay in their hands.'

*Power and Privileges of the Tenyono*: 1. All lost property went to the *Tenyono*, and if not claimed within a certain time became his property. Any man who kept anything he found would bring death on the whole compound. It was especially dangerous for the finder to keep any worked metal.

2. A hind leg of all game killed; ground tusk of elephant and part of the animal touching the ground.

3. A basket of first fruits—if a good crop.

4. He had power to prevent any one being sold. If his wishes in this respect were ignored, he, the *Tenyono*, would refuse to accept any future offering from that person.

5. He had power over all land, even where nominally in possession of individuals or families. He had authority to order any one off the land, and if he refused to go, the *Tenyono* would place a *tengwan*

<sup>1</sup> 'The *Kambonaba* sat on a chair during a battle and exhorted the warriors who went in front. He was succeeded by any brave man of the same family. We learned this custom from the Dagomba.'

<sup>2</sup> *Sukpa*, called *Dasasa* in Nankane. If any one were killed, he was expected to accept the responsibility of having the *tobega*. *Tobega* is called *vam* in Bulea. The slayer eats a small piece of the heart or liver of his victim, mixed with 'medicine'. If the slayer did not do this, and the relatives of the dead man were to touch any food eaten by him with the clothes of the dead man, he would swell up and die.

*bogolo* (*bogolo*, Nankane, *bagere*) on the land. 'If the man were to continue farming there, he would die.'

The *Tenyonu* with the section Elders discussed all important matters.

*Initiation Rites:* The Builsa practise incision about the age of puberty. The operation is called *nare ka* (cutting of the clitoris) or *gabeg* (the big knife). The men do not circumcise. They file the teeth as do Nankanse, Talense, Kusase, Kasena, Dagaba, Lobi, and Wala.

The Builsa clan and social organization, as will be seen from what has been written above, resembles that of the other tribes of the 'Moshi group' which have been examined so far. Their other customs, like themselves, appear to be a mixture of Nankanse and Kasena-Isala practices. The former have been fully dealt with elsewhere and I will leave an investigation of the latter until I come to examine these rites in their purer state as practised by these Kasen- or Isal-speaking tribes themselves.

## THE DAGABA

*History, Tribal and Clan Organization*

THE Dagaba (who are erroneously described on our maps and in official records as the Dagati or Dagarti) number, according to the last Census Report (1921), 36,500 souls. The singular of the word Dagaba is Dagao; the language is known as Dagari. Specimens of this dialect will be found in the early chapters of these volumes. The Zaberma slave-raiders included the Dagaba in the general term 'Gurense' given to so many of these tribes. Like almost every tribal group which has so far been investigated, the Dagaba are undoubtedly a very mixed stock, comprising, under this name, elements which were formerly Isala, Lobi, Wala, and possibly others. As the Chief Commissioner writes, ' . . . there is often no clear distinction between tribes. For instance Lobis, Dagartis, Isalas, and Grunshis are very mixed up, and the inhabitants of many compounds might with propriety be counted under either head or as a combination of both.'<sup>1</sup> These statements will now be subjected to a more detailed investigation in the examination of the clan settlements or 'towns' which go to make up the territorial unit marked 'Dagati' on Gold Coast maps.

The word *bure* (pl. *bura*), with which, in one form or another, we are now familiar, is used to designate the totemic exogamous patrilineal divisions. The exogamous matrilineal groupings, well known, but apparently not specially defined, exist side by side with the patrilineal groups, and are called *soba*. Once again we find the taint of witchcraft supposed only to be possible of transmission down this line. 'You have eaten in your mother's belly, if she were a witch you will be a witch.'

Here, once more, it is possible in many cases to locate particular clans in particular 'towns', a feature which is also very marked among the neighbouring tribe, the Isala. The Dagaba totem clans recorded included the following:

*Kpwire*<sup>2</sup> (pl. *kpir*) (Small mouse).  
*Nwana* (Monkey).

*Zibu* or *Zigi* (Python).  
*Wabo* (Snake).

<sup>1</sup> See 1921 Census Report, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Also an Isala clan, under name of *Kantulo*.

*Loara* (Leopard).

*Sieni* (Porcupine).

*Kunkuni* (Tortoise).

*Eba* (Crocodile).

*Boya* (Lizard).

*Gangane* (Grasshopper).

The clan totem is known as *kyiruy* (pl. *kyire*) which means simply, 'the avoidance', 'the taboo'. This appears to be the word in some form or another having *kyi* as the root, which is used all over this part of West Africa.<sup>1</sup>

The following is the account given to me of how the *kunkuni* (tortoise) came to be the *kyiruy* of that clan.

'A wife of our ancestor went to the water and left her infant in a basket. When she returned, she found that a tortoise had entered the basket. She picked it up and threw it away. It hit a stone and died, and soon after the infant also died. The Elders said the tortoise was our *kyiruy*. When a clansman sees a dead tortoise, he buries it in a cloth; if he did not do so, he could not be given a proper funeral when he died. Any one who killed a tortoise in olden days would have been killed. When a man dies, a tortoise dies; when a child is born, a tortoise is born. I have white mottled legs, my tortoise has the same; I am getting blind, so is my tortoise. When a man dies, he goes to *Dapane* (land of dead); his tortoise also goes there.'

Some of the totems given above are undoubtedly associated totems and sub-totems. A clansman of the *Kpwire* group stated that while the *Kpwire* (mouse) was his 'avoidance', being that of the first ancestor from which his clan traced descent, his particular kindred group, however, also tabooed *W'abo* (snake), because its less remote ancestor had once been lost and was dying of thirst, when a snake showed him where to find water. This ancestor in consequence adopted the snake as his own private (avoidance), but in the following generation it became that of his descendants who inherited the medicine or roots in connexion with it. There are many instances of this splitting up or forming of these subsidiary avoidances which in time tend to submerge or supersede the older more remote ancestral *taboo* and give birth in this manner to new clans. This curious and interesting fact accounts in many cases for the existence of more than one *totem* or avoidance by a single person and a single kindred group. The whole system of totemism in these parts seems to have originated in this manner.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Ashanti, *akyiwadie*.

<sup>2</sup> *Danyagere* seems the word used for this particular totem. (*Tɔy* in Isal.)



I shall now take certain Dagaba settlements and endeavour to trace (within a very limited scope) their origin and composition.

*Hean (Anglice Han)*: The inhabitants are *Kunkun-kyiribe* (Tabooers of tortoise) but also avoid *Kpwire* (mouse). The clan, as far as is known, came to Hean from Tie near Gyiraba (*Anglice* Jirapa). 'The people of Bo are our clansmen.' (Bo is a settlement (under Kane) whose inhabitants are the *Kpwire* clan.) 'If we see a Bo girl we can give her in marriage and claim the *po-kyerebo*' (bride price).

I. The following 'towns' are now under Hean: see Fig. 91.

(a) *Nendo*. This town has now an Isala as its Chief. *Nendo* is stated to have been founded from Kasiri, which in turn was founded from Hean, and the original inhabitants are of the *Kpwire* clan and may not intermarry with Hean. The settlement, however, now contains many 'strangers' of other clans, including Isala who came from Suge.

(b) *Chapure*: Originally, like Hean, from Tie. Taboo, *Kpwire*, but also *wabo* (snake) see above. They intermarry with Hean, though originally of one clan.

(c) *Guri*: Contains *Kpwire* clan, now they intermarry with Hean and Nendo but not with Chapure.

(d) *Wolo*: The inhabitants of this 'town' were originally Isala. The totem is the leaf of an edible plant called *bontoora*. (The same plant is known as *bawulimbi* in Isal and is taboo to certain Isala families in Nabulo and Nwanduon.) A clansman of Wolo states as follows: 'Our ancestor made rain and called the thunder. Our avoidance is taboo to the thunder and the lightning. This we found out when one of our ancestor's children was struck by lightning and her belly torn open and inside was found some of the fruit of the *bontoora*. Our ancestors came from Banwoo, near Lambusie. We were once Isala, now we are Dagaba. Some of our clansmen also live at Kola near Gwalo.'

(e) *Pin*: This settlement, now speaking Dagari and calling themselves Dagaba, was originally Isala (*Sisala*). Their clan is *Nwana* (monkey). 'We came originally from Takuri near Gwalo.' A second avoidance of these people is the wearing of a single sandal during lifetime which will be noted and dealt with more fully, when the Isala tribe come up for investigation.

(f) *Kasiri*: Clan *Kpwire*, do not intermarry with Hean, Guri, Chapure, or Nendo.

(g) *Kene*: *Kpwire* clan, but also contains some families of the *Nwana* (Monkey clan) from Venven (see below).

II. *Sabule* (head-quarters of another Divisional Chief), has three

'towns' under it, i.e. Nwankuri, Guo, and Bobo. All four are settlements of the *Sieni* (Porcupine clan).<sup>1</sup>

III. *Busie* (head-quarters of another Divisional Chief). The inhabitants are of Leopard clan (*Loara*).<sup>2</sup> Under the Divisional Chief of Busie are the clan settlements of the *Wo*, Iguana (*Bala* in Isal) at Fian, and the Python clan (*Zigi*) at Poleba. The town of Tori also comes under Busie, but I omitted to record the clan of the inhabitants.

IV. *Gyiraba* (*Anglice* Jirapa) is the head-quarters of the senior Chief of the Dagaba. The taboo—it can hardly be called a totem—of this settlement is the forbidding of the casting down of a cloth before a living clansman (*Pen zabo*), a taboo which is, however, ceremonially broken on his death. Under Gyiraba there are twelve settlements. Gbari, Teza, Dori, Segere—all Python clan; Tugo, Kunzokakala—*Naba* clan; Gbeturi—*Pen-zabo*, see above; Tie, Tortoise clan, see above; Sire, Iguana clan; Yaga and Nambege, probably Lobi origin, clan *Nyuo* (Leopard). One other town, Kunkyene, I omitted to record the clan.

V. *Kane* (Karni on our maps) is a Python clan settlement. Under Kane, for administrative purposes, are Ulo (Cricket, *Kpana*) clan; Kpare (Monkey clan); Bo, already mentioned. Small Mouse clan (*Kpwire*); Venven, see above, Monkey clan; Topare, also Monkey clan; Kori, Crocodile clan (*Eba*); Kulokao, clan?

VI. *Nandabe* has fifteen 'towns' under it. All are Lobi, not Dagaba.

VII. *Lambusie*: This division contains eight towns, all of which are Sisala (Isala).

VIII. *Samoa*: This division consists of seven settlements; all are Sisala not Dagaba.

IX. *Zini*: Contains twelve settlements all Sisala (Isala).

X. *Lawra*: With many sub-villages, the inhabitants of which are, for the most part, Lobi. They will be dealt with when that tribe comes up for investigation.

The full significance of the Chief Commissioner's remark, that 'Lobis, Dagartis, and Issals are very mixed up', and that 'there is no clear distinction between Tribes' will now be clear. The same

<sup>1</sup> This same clan is found among the Isala under the name of *Samvera*. The people of Walembele (Isala), informed me that their ancestors came from Nwankun (Nwankuri) and that people from these two towns do not intermarry, even to the present day.

<sup>2</sup> The Isala villages of Bulu, Sogobale, Puloma, Lelexse, and Dasima belong to the Leopard (*Pwei*) and *Nyeva* (Crocodile) clans, and informed me that their ancestors had come from Busie; Dagaba in this case thus becoming Isala.

comment might be made about almost any of the tribes, whose names are little or no criterion of a common origin for the composite elements, i.e. the clans, which now compose the larger so-called tribal unit.

*The Constitution of a Dagaba 'town'*: The Dagaba constitution presents all the main characteristics with which we are now familiar among every group so far investigated. The *Ten'dana* is here called *Tendagena*. He was head of the clan and lord of the earth (*tena-soba*). His position will be examined in more detail presently. There also appears to be an individual called *Bogomala*<sup>1</sup> (*Bore* (pl. *Bogo*) is a shrine in Dagari), to whom the *Tendagena* delegated some of his work. The part taken by the *Bogomala* in a ceremony which I attended, will be noted presently. Another official whom we have not encountered before is the *Kumbelo* (pl. *Kumbele*), who seem to act as messengers between the section-heads and the *Tendagena*. 'They have horns with which they summon people from the farms' (see Fig. 92). Formerly they arrested and bound any one who had shed human blood. The local Chief (Hean) told me quite frankly that the *Tendagena* owns the land, and that in old days he had all the power.

*Succession to Tendagenaship*: A brother succeeds, failing brothers eldest 'son' in the sense with which we are now familiar. The *Tendagena* has a special ring, which is the badge of his office. This he wears on the little finger of his left hand. There is much consulting of soothsayers, *bogobura* (pl. *bogobuguroba*) before the successor is finally appointed to see 'if the land will be spoiled or not'. The land taboos human blood; 'the shedding of it would spoil the crops'. A murderer would be expelled from the clan and his family have to give a cow and pay twenty cowries. The penalty for shedding blood—as apart from killing—was a goat, three fowls, and seven thousand seven hundred cowries. These were taken by the *Kumbelo*, given to the *Tendagena*, who would meet with the section Elders and perform the necessary sacrifices, saying, 'Two people have quarrelled and spilled blood; we have taken these things from them, that others may not do so tomorrow.' If this were not done, rain would not fall; women would not bear children; men who went to the bush would be caught by wild

<sup>1</sup> A rather curious point which I discovered later was that these *bogomala* are the descendants of 'bastards'. 'A "bastard" can never be a *Tendagena*, but the priests who actually sacrifice for the *Tendagena* are descendants of such.' 'Bastard' here, really refers to the child of a clanswoman who had not married a *yiri-yea-bia* or *ta-bia* (*tolo-bi* in Isal) where again we find the priest who assists the *Tinteintina* (*Ten'dana*) a descendant of such a 'bastard'. 'This class also act as peacemakers if riots break out in a settlement, and cry for rain.'



FIG. 90. Kanjag' Pen (note the pile of pots)



FIG. 91. The Chief of the Tortoise clan



FIG. 92. A Kumbelo

animals.' A *Tendagena* did not go to war, he remained to make sacrifices, unless the war came to the town. 'In old days before Europeans came, the following towns had Chiefs (*Nare*, s. *Na*), Wa, Isa, Busie, Funshi, Walembele, Hean. These Chiefs were under the *Tendagena* and Elders who elected him. The Chieftainship was not hereditary. It passed from one group to another.' At Hean there were two such groups, at Wa, four.<sup>1</sup> Any fine of live stock imposed by the Chief went to the *Tendagena*. The Chiefs went to war.

It is difficult to reconcile the idea of Chiefs with the old régime. Here we are dealing with something different from the dominion of Mampruse and Dagomba and possibly with a much later, although *ante* European, innovation.

Among the neighbouring tribe, the Isala, as we shall see later, Chief and any rich man were almost synonymous terms, and the office carried with it little more than a titular respect, the real authority and power lying with the Priest-King and the Elders.

*Tattooing*: So far as I could discover, the Dagaba do not tattoo. A clansman of the Tortoise clan informed me that if a man's children were always dying young, the father might then give an infant Builsa marks and name it *I'in doo* (slave). The Dagaba do not circumcise, but the women are 'cut' (*zibiri nwara*) soon after the navel cord is healed. 'This is done because the thing is not beautiful to see and is visible even through leaves.'

<sup>1</sup> See p. 452.

THE DAGABA (*continued*)

*The Compound. Inheritance. Prohibited Marriages. The Making of Arrow Poison. A Ceremony Attended*

THE Dagaba homestead differs from those which have been described, in that the houses are oblong rather than round—not a perfect oblong, for the corners of the buildings are slightly rounded. The walls are built up of layers of 'swish' which are visible owing to their not being plastered over (see Fig. 93). The compounds too tend to be less scattered, and a settlement begins to assume rather the appearance and proportions of a township. As a rule also, cattle do not appear to be kept inside the compound but in a separate kraal. Fulani herdsmen are often in charge of the herds, which perhaps accounts for the kraals being separate. Figs. 94-6 show the wives and daughters of some of these Fulani now resident among the Dagaba. The compounds are flat-roofed, but often also contain round huts which are roofed with grass in which reside as a rule some junior unmarried members of the family (compare the *detini* of the Nankanse).

*Inheritance:*<sup>1</sup> Inheritance follows the usual line, brother, 'son', grandson; the deceased's own son is excluded by an elder 'son' of the deceased's brother. One very marked difference, however, must be noted, the brother takes the deceased's brother's spirit, not the son, and the eldest son may only make offerings to his late father through this channel. The Isala have a similar custom. 'If a man's own brother, during his lifetime refused to assist his brother, the latter on his death might leave his privately acquired property—but not wealth derived from the sale of daughters—to his son.'

*Prohibited Unions:*

- (a) Into the same *bure* (clan).
- (b) Into the same *soba* (blood group).
- (c) Father's sister's child (*pulo bie*).<sup>2</sup>
- (d) Mother's brother's daughter (*araba bie*).
- (e) Any woman of mother's clan from her section.

<sup>1</sup> A wife does not bring any live stock to her husband's town; her bangles will go to her family. Anything which she acquires after marriage goes to her husband.

<sup>2</sup> *Mpulo sera bun wie*, 'My father's sister's husband is a useless thing' is a Dagaba saying.

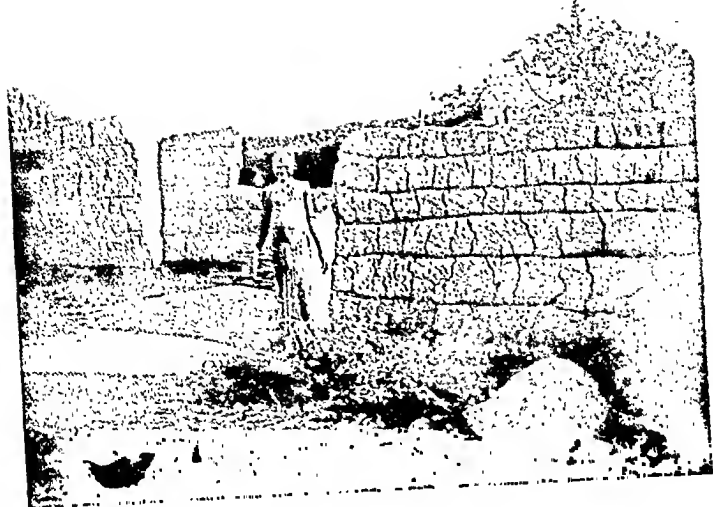


FIG. 93. A Dagaba compound



FIG. 94. A Fulani herdsman's wife and daughter





FIGS. 95-6. Fulani girls

(f) A brother and sister may not marry a sister and brother (of another clan of course) 'there would be too much familiarity as it would be like an exchange'.<sup>1</sup> A man may marry his father's or brother's widow (other than own mother) and still sacrifice to the spirit of her late husband (not so among the Nankanse). 'He may marry his wife's brother's daughter, that is very clear, as plain as the white man's road.' A Dagao may marry two sisters, even if *nyere* (the same word is used as in Nankane), 'but if you quarrel with the one, the other will take her sister's part'. Marriage with a wife's sister during the lifetime of the wife is also permitted, and if not married a brother-in-law has access to the sister of his wife.

A man may not marry a woman and at the same time marry her daughter (by her other husband) and *vice versa*, or even have such as a lover.

*A* gives his daughter, *C*, in marriage to a man, *B*. *A* does not usually marry any woman in *B*'s section, 'because if one of the in-laws were to quarrel with the wife and her father were to take her away, the other in-law would be apt to take his daughter away from the other man'.

Among the Dagaba there is a marked increase in the respect which a man pays to his wife's taboos. 'This is not because the violation would injure the husband, but because it would harm the child.' Also with regard to the mother's taboos, 'if you go to your uncle's (mother's brother's town) and partake of a sacrifice there, you must observe their taboos or you would become thin'.

We have here some suggestive facts, which, I think, serve to forge links with the time when matrilineal descent was the vogue. Others will presently be noted. In this context too, the taking over the spirit of a deceased clansman by his brother rather than the eldest son should not be overlooked. I have a note in my diary, made before I was aware of all the facts which will be stated presently, which runs, 'I am becoming more and more convinced that here (in the Northern Territories) a man acquires his clan, not because of any physiological process, that is, not because he is the son of his father, or because he is the son of his mother, but by a purely artificial process of adoption into a particular clan by his participation after birth in clan sacrifices and by "eating clan medicine". If a man partakes of a clansman's sacrifices and does not keep the clan's taboos he becomes thin.' Rites at funeral customs or lack of them lead to similar conclusions.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 286.

*Preparation of Arrow Poison among the Dagaba:*<sup>1</sup> 'Before we commence to make arrow poison, sacrifices are made to our ancestors, saying, "These arrows which you used to make, we too wish to make". Sacrifices are also made at the cross-roads in order that any animal which may escape wounded may die should it come across these paths. The men who are about to prepare the poison now set off to the bush where they have to spend the night. They choose a spot where the ground is crusted and crunches under the feet. The reason that they leave their compounds that night is because no man must have sexual intercourse and no one must eat or drink while the poison is being prepared. When they have finished making it, they all return to one compound where a very old woman prepares food. She asks them three times "Have you finished?" This old woman then takes a horn, which has broken or dropped off a cow, in which medicine has been put. This is placed in the sun and covered with a black calabash. The old woman who prepares the food must not speak to any one from the time the men go to the bush until they return. After they have eaten the food, they disperse. The horn and calabash are kept by the head of the section in which the old woman resides. The arrows which have been poisoned are carried back from the bush by a young girl, who has never known a man. If any man is ever wounded by a poisoned arrow he is treated with medicine taken from the black calabash, and the stick used for stirring the poison is broken, the wounded man being told this has been done. Offerings are also made to the same spirits who were informed that the poison was about to be prepared.'

*A Ceremony attended on October 22nd 1929, at a spot known as Bonkyeren:* The year 1929 was marked by a visitation of a swarm of locusts, which caused considerable damage, just before the crops were harvested. I was at the time living among the Dagaba, the guest of some of the Tortoise clan. The clouds of locusts, which were so numerous as to hide the sun like a red dust-storm, had flown over the local farms without alighting. On that occasion, the shrine called Bonkyeren—which I was informed meant 'You know the consequences, yet you do it'—had received six fowls and the promise of a cow did these destructive insects not return. The ceremony about to be described was the giving of the promised cow. The gifts on this occasion consisted of a cow, a goat, and five fowls. The ceremony was attended by the *Tendagera*, the *Bogomala*, the *Kumbelo*, and the

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Pentia* among the Nankanse.



FIG. 97. 'The blood was caught in a pot'

section Elders. The Chief (Territorial Ruler) was not present. The scene opened with a speech by the *Tendagena* who said: 'Bonkyeren', whose title is *Hean Teya* (Town of Hien), 'I have already come to you and raised my cry that the locusts should not eat up any town. The women raised the war cry and the men heard it from afar and assembled. We cried out before you that the locusts might not come, and when they came they passed to one side. We promised you a cow, and to-day we bring it, and if we do not hear anything about these locusts for two years we will give you another.' After the *Tendagena* had spoken thus, water was poured on the ground by the *Bogomala*, accompanied by the following words: 'Let Samboi,<sup>1</sup> my ancestor, receive water'.

A fowl was next taken and its wings folded behind it with the head between them; its throat was slit. The following words were spoken. 'You have heard the words spoken by the *Tendagena*. My ancestor, receive this fowl and call all our ancestors to receive a fowl for Bonkyere.' The fowl was thrown down beside the heap of potsherds seen in the photograph and watched intently as it fluttered. A sigh of relief went up when it was seen that it was 'accepted' (i.e. finally lay still on its back). 'O *dega la*' (He has received it). A second, third, and fourth fowl were dispatched for Bonkyere, Napo, and Nagani; Lempere and Bulolo and Sonore; Tamvile and Kulwo, respectively. (Napo and Nagani are two rivers; Lempere is a river; Bulolo is a rock; Tamvile a god?; Sonore a river.)

Next the cow was killed, a pole being thrust down the poor beast's throat to prevent it crying out. Its throat was cut and the blood caught in a pot (see Fig. 97). The following words were spoken: 'We have cried before you that you must not permit all the crops to be eaten. You did not let the locusts eat all, so we give you a cow.' Next a fowl and a goat which I had contributed were sacrificed and a blessing asked on my work and hunting. I left after this, but was informed that the livers of all the sacrifices were boiled in the cow's blood and eaten 'to prevent any one hating his neighbour'. Some earth from the place where the sacrifices were made was mixed with this. Every one present ate of this meat. The remainder of the sacrifice was partaken of by every clansman and clanswoman in the town.

<sup>1</sup> Samboi was the *Tendagena* who held the office previous to the present holder.

THE DAGABA (*continued*)*Rites de Passage*

BIRTH, puberty, marriage, and funeral rites, among the Dagaba, while all presenting many of the features with which the reader is now familiar, nevertheless possess some characteristic observances which have not hitherto been encountered or at any rate recorded. It is just possible that some at least of these apparent innovations are not really such. Previous informants may have merely omitted or forgotten to mention them.

*Marriage Customs:* The following is mainly a translation of an account recorded in the vernacular:

A Dagao father<sup>1</sup> will tell his son, when the latter is 'ripe', to go and find a wife—not a clanswoman—or he may send him to his mother's village to his mother's brother for the latter to do so.<sup>2</sup> He shows his son two separate amounts of cowries; one, which he has buried in a pot, of 30,000–50,000 (about £2 10s. 0d.), the other, an amount of 1,000–2,000. The former is called *po-kyerebo*<sup>3</sup> and is the bride-price, the latter sum is for the preliminary courting expenses. When the young man sees the girl whom he wishes to marry, he speaks to her and offers her a present of 20 cowries.<sup>4</sup> If she accepts this from him, it shows she is agreeable, and she will show it to her mother, who will tell the father. The youth will then return and report to his father that he has been accepted. A man is now sought out who is a son of a woman of the suitor's town who has married in the future bride's town. This man is known as *Ditina* (*Isiga* in Nankane, *Sipatoru* in Isal). Another man is sought out who is a son by a woman of the future bride's town who has married and lives in the suitor's town (he will thus be a clansman of the suitor, just as the former *Ditina* would be a clansman of the bride). This man is also known as *Ditina*. The 30,000–50,000 cowries are now handed over to the *Ditina* in the suitor's town, who takes them to the *Ditina* in the girl's town and they both

<sup>1</sup> If the father is not the senior in the compound, his elder brother will do so. This is always implied.

<sup>2</sup> A very suggestive procedure in view of what was written above; see p. 411.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'something for marrying a woman'.

<sup>4</sup> Compare the Wala; see p. 455.

go to the girl's father, accompanied also by a brother of the suitor. Here, the money is counted out and handed to the girl's father, who, if not the senior male of his group, will hand it over to his eldest brother. The father of the girl (or his eldest brother) will take a fowl and a few cowries and make an offering to his ancestor's shrine, saying as he does so, that as his spirit (*kpene*) had assisted him in begetting a daughter, he must be the one to receive the bride-price first. He will also report the engagement to the head of his section and may offer him something, but the section-head will tell him to keep it, saying he will need the money to buy a wife for one of his sons or for a funeral custom should one befall. A day will be arranged when some clansmen of the bridegroom's town are to go to the compound of the bride's mother and break down some of the flat roofs of her compound and rebuild them with new 'swish' (mud). This custom is called *vi die*.<sup>1</sup> The same day when this work is finished, the bride will be led by the *Ditina* from her town, accompanied by married girls, to the house of the *Ditina* in the bridegroom's town who will prepare food for them. The reason that married girls accompany the bride, is because 'if unmarried women were to go they would be seized upon by the men of the bridegroom's town and taken as wives. The men who thus seized them would, however, later approach the girls' parents and pay the *po-kyerebo* in the usual way. The persons who accompanied the bride from her town will remain in the bridegroom's town about three days and then return home. About twenty days later, the newly married couple will pay a visit to the bride's town. There is not any such taboo among the Dagaba concerning a man and his wife having sexual intercourse in the compound of the latter's parents, as exists among the Nankanse and elsewhere. It is a very grave offence, however, for a wife ever to commit adultery in her mother's compound,<sup>2</sup> much more serious than doing so in her husband's home.

The *Ditina* will always look after the interests of the parties whom they represent and are appealed to in case of quarrels.

A Dagaba father is only responsible for finding one wife for his son; if sons want more than one they must work and earn the *po-kyerebo* themselves. The *po-kyerebo* is paid before the woman leaves her parents' compound. After she has borne her husband a child, a ram,

<sup>1</sup> A similar custom exists among the Nankanse and Isala, but after the marriage has been consummated.

<sup>2</sup> 'If she did so, she could never return to her husband's home, for when she ate food there she would die' (compare Nankane *dulum*, p. 312.).

known as *kyerebo-pere*, is given in addition. Cows are not generally given except by those Dagaba who have been influenced by Lobi customs. 'If *po-kyerebo* is not paid, then the children belong to the mother.'

*Adultery*: It is taboo for even an unmarried girl to have sexual intercourse with any man in her own parents' compound. Should she do so, however, before marriage, the results are not so fatal as afterwards. The Dagaba have the same superstitious dread of an unconfessed sin, and the same curious manner of dealing with a guilty conscience which has been noted among the Nankanse, where a woman who feels she cannot confess her adultery, but who still loves her husband, will run away and marry the adulterer or even some one else, doing so only because she intends to return to her injured husband with a clear conscience. For a Dagaba wife to be unfaithful to her husband at his own town entails no fatal results. Another very curious belief exists, whereby it is thought that if a married woman and her lover can contrive to have sexual relations on the same mat on which the woman and her husband sleep, the taboo, with its attendant fatal results, concerning having illicit sexual relations in the wife's parents' compound, is removed. In the case of adultery by a wife in her husband's town (that would ordinarily mean with a clansman of her husband), the injured husband would beat both the offenders, but 'would not follow the male adulterer'. The latter would himself bring 20 cowries (about 2*d.*), and his family-head would bring about 3,000 more and a sheep to the brother of the injured husband. The unfaithful wife would prepare beer and the male adulterer be called to come and drink with the husband and an agreement entered into, either to terminate the illicit relations between the parties concerned, or to recognize and, as it were, legalize it, by the husband agreeing to allow his wife to have her lover, on the understanding that the latter works for the husband on his farm and repairs his house. Such an arrangement is known as *Sen-kpe-dia* (lover enters house).<sup>1</sup> The sheep is cooked and eaten, and the cowries divided up outside the compound. The injured husband, his father, his children, and other occupants of the compound are forbidden to eat any of the sheep or take any of the cowries. The beer is drunk by the husband and the adulterer, drinking at the same time out of one calabash—and by every one in their sections. The sheep and a fowl are sacrificed

<sup>1</sup> A similar custom exists among the Isala, known also as *Hal dwo dea* (lover enters house).



to the land to remove the *mora* (uncleanness). 'If this were not done, and the unfaithful wife were to give her husband "water" (i.e. food) he would become dry and always be wanting to sleep.' The remainder of the sacrifice must be consumed outside the compound and on no account brought inside.

*Conception and Birth:* When a woman conceives, she pretends to know nothing about it, and it is taboo to tell her or to mention the fact until 'water has been thrown at her'. The ceremony is performed as follows. A soothsayer will be consulted by the husband's father (or his elder brother) as to whom should be called to throw the water. A sister of the husband who has married elsewhere is generally selected. She arrives secretly in the night. 'Medicine' is mixed with water and the woman takes up her stand outside the pregnant woman's sleeping-room. Some one then goes into the hut and awakens the sleeping woman and tells her some fictitious story to cause her to rush outside, perhaps saying, for example, that her mother is dead. As she passes out of the doorway, the waiting woman throws the water over her. 'Next day people will joke with her saying, "You have eaten ground nuts".' This ceremony is known as *Ba baro pua* (They allow the belly). The woman who throws the water is given some grain food and a guinea-fowl and then returns home. Before the water is thrown, the bride's parents are informed, if not, they will be angry and declare, 'We did not give you this girl as a slave, the cowries that you paid are only that her children may be yours'.<sup>1</sup> When the woman is heavy with child, this same woman who threw the water, who is known as *poya* (*po-yabelega* in Nankane), is again summoned and she will come and take off (*furi pogo pua*) all waist-beads and waist-strings and necklets, leaving only bangles on the pregnant woman. These things are laid aside and a red string waist-girdle called *sie' ba*<sup>2</sup> is put on instead and will remain on until it falls off.

*Births:* Old women (*po-togolo*) assist at the confinement. It is unlucky to be delivered of a child feet first; such an infant is called *Tulle* (compare Nankane *Atule*). If a woman dies before delivery, she is cut open and the body removed and buried separately. 'A thing like this must have been caused by the woman having committed adultery at her mother's compound.'

It is very unlucky to have a child born with any of its teeth. The

<sup>1</sup> Without this payment any children born to the woman would belong to her and would be known as *sensenbie* (lover's children).

<sup>2</sup> Called *nwen fean*, in Isal.

father must not on any account see the tooth, which is pulled out. Should a child be stillborn, it is buried on the kitchen midden, as are infants who die. The afterbirth is put in a pot and buried behind the compound. The navel string when it drops off is folded in a rag and placed in a crack in the mud wall (of the mother's sleeping-room) which is then plastered over (compare Nankanse custom). There are some hunters who may not see their young until the navel string has dropped off. 'This is because it is the taboo of some "medicine" (fetish) which they possess.' A Dagaba father may not do any work until his child's navel string has dropped off. Among this tribe, it does not seem uncommon for a wife to go to her mother's home to be confined. When a woman bears a child which quickly dies, her husband will send her to his parents-in-law for her next confinement. In such cases, as soon as the woman is delivered, a man will come from the parents-in-law's town to the town of the husband and seize and run off with a fowl. He will be chased and caught, when he will say, 'Your wife has delivered'. Some of the Dagaba have a ceremony before a child is allowed to come out of a room for the first time. Others, on the third day, after sweeping up all the rubbish in the confinement hut and casting it away at the cross-roads, permit the mother and child to come outside without further formality. Some of the Dagaba have the same superstition which will be noted presently among the Isala, about climbing on the flat roof above the heads of a mother and a new-born child. Some children are never put on the flat roof until old enough to climb up by themselves. I was informed that these and many other practices varied in different households according to custom—not of the mother—but of the husband's mother—who might have been a Dagao, a Walo, and Isala, or a Lobi.

*'Stealing' of a Dagaba Child:* After an infant's navel cord is healed<sup>1</sup> the 'small mother' of the infant's mother, i.e. one of her father's other wives, accompanied by a young boy carrying a knife, the woman carrying a calabash of shea butter, an egg, and some balls of *dawa dawa*, come to the compound where the new-born infant is. If they find the infant alone in the hut, they put some ashes at the doorway, lay the egg on the ashes, make a mark on the ground with the knife, pick up the infant, and carry it off home, leaving the calabash of shea butter behind. All this is carried out in complete silence and 'they will not even drink any water'. Immediately the mother of the infant returns and misses her child, and as soon as she sees the calabash &c., she will

<sup>1</sup> If a girl, the clitoris will have been removed before she is carried off.

know what has happened and set off after her baby, remaining at her mother's village about ten days, or in some cases even until the child is weaned.

It must be remembered that a man does not resume cohabitation with a wife until after she has ceased to suckle her child. 'If he did, it would spoil her milk and give the child diarrhoea and the child would die.'

Should the wife happen to have been confined at her mother's village, the husband's mother will carry off the infant to the father's compound.

*Naming a Child:* Should an infant be crying a great deal, the father (head of the compound) will go and consult the soothsayer. He may be told that an ancestor wishes to be *segera* (Nankane *segera*) to the child. 'One who had grey hairs before he (or she) died may become a child's *segera*. A child's *segera* may be on a father's mother's side or a mother's mother's side.' A child will be given the name of its *segera*, being named by the senior woman in the compound, or the senior male. They will then say, 'To-day, So-and-so has come back home' and they will tell the child not to cry any more.

*Funeral Customs:* The following was told me by the Elders of the Tortoise clan: When a senior member of the Tortoise clan falls very ill, his sister, who is married in some other clan's town, will return home to attend him. A man must not be allowed to die lying down on a mat, he must die supported from behind by his 'sister'. If a person should die unattended, no one must touch the body until the sextons (*baune*), compare Nankane *bayase*, come and sprinkle the body with water. As soon as a man dies, the corpse is washed by his 'sisters' i.e. clanswomen of his town, not his real sisters, 'they will be too grief-stricken'. The body is washed in tepid water and dressed in a white gown, white trousers, and a white cap.<sup>1</sup> A second white gown, which will be removed before burial, is put on top of these. A special gown is kept for this purpose and is called *nwangba*. It is only used for elderly people, including old women, who are also buried dressed in trousers. The eldest son will present the burial clothes to his father, offering them three times, before finally throwing them down before the corpse. In the case of a woman, her eldest daughter will throw down waist-strings after presenting them four times. The body is then taken out of the yard and set up resting on a cowskin. An animal is 'cut' at the foot of the corpse to the accompaniment of the words,

<sup>1</sup> Other clans among the Dagaba bury the corpse naked.

'You are dead to-day; we bring this goat and cock to cut at your legs (*nwa gwere*); where you are going, and women meet you on the path, give way to them, but when you meet men fight your way through them all'.

*The Ceremony of Bun-nera*, lit. *the trampled thing*: On the day on which the corpse is carried outside to be set up (see Figs. 98 and 99) a cow is held down in the yard of the compound and trampled to death. When it is dead, it must not be carried through the gateway but is thrown over the wall, taken to the section of the *sa-bie* (half-brothers),<sup>1</sup> and cut up. Women and children must not eat of the meat, only the Elders.

*The Bun-nwela Ceremony* (lit. *beaten things*) called *Bun-wora in Nankane*: This ceremony takes place in the yard of the compound, before the corpse is taken outside. Offerings are made by the following: (a) clansmen in the deceased's town, (b) clansmen who have founded other towns. These offerings consist of sheep, goats, and fowls. After the corpse has been carried outside and set up, 'sisters' sit beside it fanning it to keep off flies. The xylophones and drums are set up in the shade (see Fig. 100).<sup>2</sup> The friends of the deceased come forward and salute the corpse saying, 'You have departed and left us'. The corpse is buried generally on the third day. In the dry season it remains sitting up outside day and night. In the wet season it is brought inside to prevent hyenas carrying it off. Near relations and the widows are led about held by the arm or tied with ropes to prevent their committing suicide owing to grief (see Figs. 101 and 102). All adults, males and females, are buried in the yard of the compound. A very old man will have a new grave made for him. The *Tendagens* may forbid the burial of 'a bad man' until his relations appease him. When a new grave has to be dug, the *baur' kfoz* (head sexton) takes a calabash and makes a cross inside it with some 'medicine'. The calabash is laid, inverted, on the ground; the sexton spits on his fingers and touches the calabash three or four times according to the sex of the deceased. After that, they commence to dig the grave. Before burial, the upper garment is removed and one of the wide sleeves of the gown below is torn and the ends bound round the body. Any pockets in the gown

<sup>1</sup> *Sa-bie* in Nankane, i.e. sections founded by half-brothers by the same father of common ancestor. This group take an important part in funeral customs 'as they are not too sad at the death of your father to attend to and manage the funeral arrangements'.

<sup>2</sup> This photograph was taken at an Isala funeral.



FIG. 99. A Dagaba funeral



FIG. 98. The corpse is put up outside the compound



FIG. 100. 'Xylophones are set up in the shade'

are removed and if there were any coloured threads on the gown these are cut out.<sup>1</sup> The loin-cloth is removed entirely.

A Dagao will take an oath saying, 'I swear by my father with a white gown in the grave'. The corpse is let down feet first into the grave (see Fig. 103). A male is laid on his right side, a female on her left side, resting on a strip of cowskin. Before a grave is closed, a *baune* belonging to each kindred group has a good look round to see that no *sia* (soul) of the group which he represents has remained in the grave. Every kindred group takes care to have one or more of its members trained as *baune* (Isal *kalva*, Nankane *bayase*). A trained *baune* (and certain others who have the gift from birth) 'can see souls'. *Baune* have also to see that a corpse is properly buried, e.g. that his arms are not twisted under it; 'if this were not done, should the deceased return, he would be deformed'. Before a clansman is buried, the following curious ceremony has to be performed to prevent his taking away with him (or her) the power of the clan totem. Among the Dagaba, the custom is called *ligi kyirun* (the removal of the clan totem).<sup>2</sup> The ceremony is as follows: A black fowl is taken by a clansman who squats in front of the corpse. He then passes the fowl all over the body, saying as he does so, 'Do not permit the totem of our clan to go with this corpse, or our bearing of children'. He then cuts the fowl's throat (see Fig. 104).<sup>3</sup> The *baune* wash at the graveside after the mouth has been closed up. The widows must not have sexual intercourse after the first funeral custom until a year later when a second ceremony called *kpin dam* is held. Beer is prepared by clanswomen of the deceased's clan who have married in other towns. The Elders assemble and cowries are shared out among the sextons. The deceased's quiver and bow are taken out and broken at the cross-roads. The arrows are removed from the quiver and given to the eldest son along with his father's *pila* or grass bag into which an eldest son is never allowed to look during his father's lifetime.

Next day, the widows and children have their heads shaved and the *bun pela* (white waist-strings) which were put on the widows a year

<sup>1</sup> The Isala tear the loin-cloth and turn it back to front, and also remove any coloured threads from the gown.

<sup>2</sup> I found out on inquiry that a similar custom exists among the Nankanse, where it is known as *pise* (the sweeping); also an Isala custom (*lese kasun*). It is only done in case of an adult with children. Only clansmen are allowed to be present.

<sup>3</sup> This photograph is rather curious. The corpse was completely covered with its gown, but behind it, like a shadow, may be seen what appears to be the head and shoulders of a man.

previously are removed. After this has been done, a small calabash is hung by a string behind each widow's back and they walk about thus until evening when every one assembles to see the *nwari nware* (the breaking of the calabash). Each widow in turn places her calabash on the ground and tries to break it with her foot. If she succeeds in doing so, it shows she has remained chaste since her husband's death, if not, she will then confess with whom she has committed adultery. The following ceremony then takes place. The male and female adulterer are led to the outskirts of the town. A sheep is led forward by the head of the family of the male adulterer. The clansmen then fall upon this sheep with their knives and cut it to pieces. They then turn upon the man and the woman; the man's skin covering is cut to pieces on his body and his waist-cloth torn off and cut up, the string girdles and leaves of the woman are torn off and the delinquents fly to their respective homes. The guilty couple are compelled to marry, but are disgraced for ever, and when they die, they are buried apart and naked. Even children born to them are derided and can never become *Tendagera*. 'To meet them in the morning is unlucky, a dog is better than they. They have broken a taboo.'<sup>1</sup>

I asked my informants the following further questions:

(a) Q. When a man dies, do they consult the soothsayer as to the cause of death.

A. No, not unless the deceased was known to have committed some sin.

(b) Q. Do you 'carry the corpse' to see if a witch.

A. Only those who have come under Lobi influence do so.

A son may marry a father's widow other than his own mother, but a father may not take the widow of his son. If the widows do not marry into the clan of the deceased, the late husband's family are entitled to claim bride-price for them.

The following special funeral customs will now be examined.

(a) Funeral for a person dying of small-pox.

(b) Funeral for a person who has been killed.

(c) Funeral of a young person.

(d) Funeral of an infant.

(e) Funeral of a man's wife (as told by husband).

(f) Funeral of a daughter, married to a non-clansman, really the

<sup>1</sup> Among the Isala, a fine of about 2d. and a fowl is all the penalty for a similar offence. Among the Nankanse, if a person, guilty of such an offence goes near a sick person, 'he or she will die'.





FIG. 101. 'Near relations are led about by the arms'



FIG. 102. '... or tied with ropes'



FIG. 103. 'The corpse is let down feet first into the grave'



FIG. 104. Sweeping the clan totem from the corpse

same as (c) but narrated from the point of view of the deceased's father.<sup>1</sup>

(a) *Funeral of a Person dying of Small-pox*: When a man dies of small-pox (*gyeleme*), whatever may have been his position, he is buried in the bush; no man may ever make a farm on that spot. He is buried naked in an oblong grave (instead of a round vault) and the earth filled in on top of him. The sextons who bury must have had small-pox. There is not any mourning for such a person. His wife and children may be sorry, but there is no public funeral. The clothes belonging to the dead are thrown away.

A leper is accorded the usual funeral custom, but he is buried in a separate grave which is filled in. This grave is made near, or on, the kitchen midden and people throw rubbish on the grave.

(b) *Funeral of a man killed in War*: An enemy is dragged to near his own town, and his head cut off and kept for making 'medicine' by the *zunwara* (head cutters). When a clansman is killed in war, he is buried in the family vault, in a white gown, but there is not any trampling of a cow and beer is not cooked. His widows bathe at once and may marry almost immediately.

(c) *Funeral of a Young Person*: 'The funeral of a young person is a very sad thing; the funeral of an old person is a subject of laughter' (compare Nankanse, see p. 193). The body is set high up for every one to see. The body of a young girl is not dressed in trousers.

(d) *Funeral of an Infant*: When a baby is stillborn, it is put in a pot with the afterbirth and buried on the midden heap. When a woman always has difficulty in giving birth she will be given 'medicine' to prevent conception. 'She is beaten with the branch of a tree called *gaa*.' If a woman's children are always dying when very young, the body may be circumcised before burial, or a slit made in the top of its ear, or a bit cut off the lobe of the ear, or it may be tattooed with Builsa marks (see p. 400), or named 'Slave'. Children who do not die until they are weaned or beginning to walk are buried in the family vault (*ya*) (*yo* in Nankane, *vaan* in Isal, *yauo* in Mole). If a child has a *nyere*, *gyilli* (xylophones) are played at the funeral, otherwise only drums. There is, however, no cooking of beer. The parents of a woman whose child has died must be informed, and they will attend the funeral. The mother of the child will remain at home with her mother for about a month.

(e) *Funeral of a Man's Wife*: When a man's wife becomes very ill,

<sup>1</sup> It is often instructive and valuable to obtain these different points of view.

her mother is informed and she will come and stay with her daughter until she dies. The rest of the family will be at once informed through the *ditina*. He will report to every one of the clan and the people will run crying 'Ma-biri', mother's child, and will set out to the town where the funeral is being held. The father of the dead woman will come and perform the *ligi* ceremony to remove her clan *kyirun*; only after he has done so may the dead woman be buried by her husband's people, *baune* (sextons) from her clan seeing that everything is in order according to the clan's customs. The clanswomen of the dead woman have the right to loot fowls, goats, &c., but the things so taken may be redeemed later by their owners with cowries.<sup>1</sup>

(f) *Funeral of a Daughter married to a Non-clansman in another Town:* 'As soon as my daughter falls ill, I will be told and I will set off at once accompanied by my wife to the town where my daughter has married. I will procure medicine and add to that which my son-in-law has given. If she dies, her *ditina* will run to my town and tell every one, and they will begin to mourn. Some one will come and catch hold of me before I am told (see Fig. 101) to prevent me injuring myself.<sup>2</sup> All our clanspeople set off immediately for the town where she lies dead. I will take presents for the *gyilli* (xylophone players). It is her husband's duty to supply clothes for the dead body. Even had she died in my town and had I supplied clothes and dressed the body, her husband, before he removed the body, would put on clothes supplied by himself. The husband of my daughter gives one of my *sa-bie* (half-brothers) a black fowl to remove my daughter's *kyirun*<sup>3</sup> (the power of the clan totem) from my child. My half-brother does this because I am too distressed. Our *kyirun* is in her body; these we are taking by passing the black fowl over her body. I have my *baune* with me to see that, after her husband's sextons have finished, everything has been done according to our clan custom'.

Figs. 105 and 106 show how the Dagaba dress.

<sup>1</sup> Compare the Nankanse custom.

<sup>2</sup> Cases of suicide under such circumstances are not uncommon, the mourners knocking their heads against a wall or hanging themselves or stabbing themselves with poisoned arrows.

<sup>3</sup> The fact that this ceremony is not performed for a non-adult would seem to show that such a one is not a full clansman.



Figs. 105-6. Dagaba

THE LOBER (*ANGLICE*, LOBI)*History, Tribal and Clan Organization*

THIS tribe call themselves Lober, with a singular, Loba; their language they term Loberu. According to the 1921 Census Report they number 32,140 persons of both sexes. The Lobi inhabit the extreme north-western area of the Northern Territories, spreading south along a narrow strip bounded on the west by the Black Volta. Their real habitat is across this river, in the French Ivory Coast, whence members of the tribe are migrating to British Territory in ever increasing numbers. They are perhaps the most primitive of any of the tribes in the Northern Territories. Their language has been discussed in the early chapters of this volume. It belongs to the Mole group, and is so like that parent language that I found, after a short residence among them (the Lobi), that I could understand and make myself understood when talking Mole. I found the Lobi very shy and 'jumpy' at first, possibly owing to the fact that the French were at that time operating against the tribe in a military expedition just across the Volta. Once their confidence was gained, however, I found them absolutely delightful to work among, and I have carried away very pleasant remembrances of my stay among them. From an anthropological standpoint, the Lobi are very interesting and important, as they represent the most primitive stage in evolution found among the whole of the tribes falling into what I have termed the Mole group, the investigation of whom is now nearing completion—a stage, moreover, through which all the other tribes have probably passed. The investigation of their clan system will, I believe, throw some new light on the difficult question of clan totemism, and matrilineal, as opposed to patrilineal, descent, not only in these parts, but possibly also elsewhere.

Lobi clans are divided into the two groups which have everywhere been met with so far—the patrilineal totemic group, known elsewhere as *bute* (with its variants), and known among the Lobi as *dogoro*, and the matrilineal exogamous blood-group, called elsewhere, *sōō*, or its variants, and known among the Lobi as *bello*<sup>1</sup> or *ze*<sup>2</sup> (blood).

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes also heard *bale*.

<sup>2</sup> This *z* in some dialects is pronounced *j*, as in the first personal pronoun in French, e.g. in dialect spoken at Tioli.

The *dogoro* are possibly the orthodox totemic clans, but for the purposes of recognition and description, the totem occupies quite a secondary place, clans being known, not by their particular avoidances, but by names which are, or are associated with, the clansmen's common remote ancestors (compare the Kusase). These patrilineal exogamous divisions will be detailed presently. When we come to examine the blood-groups (*bello*), tracing descent, and what is still more interesting, inheritance—through the female line—we find the missing link for which I have sought in vain elsewhere, i.e. particular names to designate these 'blood' groups, which are just as prominent and well known as their parallel clan designations. So far then we have these two divisions: (a) the *dogoro*, or patrilineal group, with its particular 'totem', or at any rate, 'avoidance', or taboo, and; (b) the *bello*, or matrilineal group, without any particular magic or religious association, it being rather regarded as a physiological fact—which, however, is of such social importance that it is, or appears to be, the deciding factor in the inheritance of property. To put it in another way, we have here apparently the rather curious anomaly of patrilineal clans, where, nevertheless, inheritance of property is through the sister's son. I shall return to the discussion of this subject again, meanwhile passing on to give a list of *dogero* and *bello*. The following is a table showing the *dogobo* (s. *dogoro*)<sup>1</sup> with their accompanying avoidances (where known) which I have been able to record.

<i>Dogoro.</i>	<i>Totem or Avoidance (Kyiru).</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
1. Kusele	<i>Zun</i> or <i>jun</i> (a snake). <i>Pie-puo-sab</i> (eating food out of a basket, a sub-totem?)	Kushele is said to mean a stone; name of ancestor.
2. Boyele	<i>Kankoo</i> (water in which <i>dawa</i> has been put).	Boyele; name of an ancestor.
3. Somale	<i>So-kyera-puo-sab</i> (eating food at cross-roads) <i>Kyie</i> (a kind of squirrel).	Samale; name of ancestor; said to mean 'witches have helped us'.
4. Metoor	(a) <i>Kyie</i> (squirrel). (b) <i>Nwanzie</i> (red pigeon). (c) <i>Onzie</i> (red mouse).	Metoor; name of ancestor; said to mean 'Build until you reach a river'.
5. Zage	<i>Nabars</i> (a blackbird).	Zage (fever), name of ancestor.
6. Nabele	<i>Chapila</i> (paddy bird).	Nabele, founder of group.
7. Kpele	<i>Pie-puo-sab</i> (see above).	Kpele, ancestor's name said to mean, 'we will enter the old house'.

<sup>1</sup> The root in this word is almost certainly *doge*, to beget.

<i>Dogoro.</i>	<i>Totem or Avoidance (Kyiru).</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
8. Bekone	<i>Nyusabla</i> (black cat).	Bekone, a name, means 'more water than beans'.
9. Bimbile	To have no taboo of any kind is the curious taboo of this group.	Bimbile, name of ancestor, means 'rolling'.
10. Kowere	(a) <i>Gbapila</i> (paddy bird). (b) <i>Zun</i> (snake). (c) <i>Duolo</i> (mud fish).	Kowere means 'kill and open up' and refers to a tradition about the cutting up of a pregnant woman to decide an argument about the sex of her unborn child. <sup>1</sup>
11. Gane	<i>Nyuoba</i> (leopard).	Gane, means 'pride'.
12. Gbane	?	
13. Banyine	<i>Sen</i> (porcupine).	Banyine means 'Where shall we put it?'
14. Yipale	(a) <i>Kyie</i> (squirrel). (b) <i>Senale</i> (small mouse).	Yipale means 'new house'.
15. Sauyile	(a) <i>Nwam</i> (monkey). (b) <i>Duolo</i> (mud fish). (c) <i>Nwa-nzie</i> (red pigeon).	Sanyile is said to mean 'houses between houses'.
16. Nanyole		
17. Nayile	?	Nayile means 'Chief's house'.
18. Sanbale	<i>Senale</i> (small mouse).	Sanbale, a name of the ancestor, is a kind of grass.
19. Pureyile	<i>Zun</i> (snake).	Puriyi, here a name, is also kind of trec.
20. Bowale	(a) <i>Kyie</i> (squirrel). (b) <i>Wun</i> (snake).	This clan came from Wa.
21. Zenzule	<i>Wulpill</i> (roan).	Zenzule, a name, means 'only soup in the hand'.
22. Basiele	<i>Zompo</i> (hedgehog).	Basule means 'If I continue to live I shall get clothes'.
23. Bakyele	?	—
24. Donale	?	—
25. Nwanbule	<i>Zun</i> (snake).	—
26. Kazile	<i>Vur do puo sab</i> (eating after porridge stick left in pot).	—
27. Birepole	(a) <i>Senale</i> (small mouse). (b) <i>Kyie</i> (squirrel).	—
28. Yerse	?	—
29. Butule	<i>Wulpill</i> (roan).	—
30. Nakyele	(a) <i>Kyie</i> (squirrel). (b) <i>Bazuo</i> (also a kind of squirrel).	—
31. Nambegele	?	—
32. Dontiele	?	—

<sup>1</sup> This curious story is also heard among the Builsa and Isala.



It will be seen from the above, that the process, which is ever continuing, is the splitting up of the original clan into new groups, tracing descent from a less and ever less remote ancestor, in some cases keeping the original totem, in others acquiring some entirely new one as a subsidiary or even prime taboo.

The Kushele have thus divided and formed four new 'clans', as it were; Kpele (7), Domale (24), Yipale (14), Nayole (16), which now intermarry. Metoor (4), and Nabele (6), were originally one *dogoro*, and although they have now different taboos, have so far kept the original bond in mind that they still do not intermarry. Similarly, Boyle (2), and Birepole (27), although the names and avoidances are no indication of kinship, do not intermarry. Nos. 30 and 32 do not intermarry, but No. 31 marries Nos. 30 and 32, although my informants state they call each other *sa-bie* (half-brothers), intermarry, but they added, 'a clanswoman who was blind stayed at home and had children'.<sup>1</sup>

A person inquires of another to what clan he belongs, by saying, *Fo yi dogoro ne bo?* (What *dogoro* do you come out from?).

The Lobi clan settlements tend to become mixed. The following reason was given to me for this. 'Sons may run away from their fathers and go to the settlement of the maternal uncle (*ar bile*). The descendants of such down the male line have the father's clan.'

*The Blood-groups (Bello or Ze):* The following were recorded:

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| (1) Hienbe.           | (6) Somda.             |
| (2) Kambile.          | (7) Dabile.            |
| (3) Da.               | (8) Mmeda.             |
| (4) Kpale (or Kpala). | (9) Kpoda (or Kpolda). |
| (5) Some (or Soma).   | (10) Korenda.          |

I asked a Loba whether he considered *dogoro* or *bello* the more important. He replied, firstly, by quoting a proverb, '*Bello ulyela wear be kai; dogero ulyela ferfer kpe* (Your *bello* may say, "There is no place for you here;" your *dogoro* says, "Squeeze in and enter"). In olden times our sisters and daughters went out and married and bore children in other "towns" (clan settlements). When war came, they did not help us, but fought against their uncle. When one of your *dogoro* dies, you mourn, but when one of your *bello* dies, you know that you are going to inherit property.'

The Lobi community are divided into sections (*yauno*, pl. *yaunobo*),

<sup>1</sup> See p. 161.

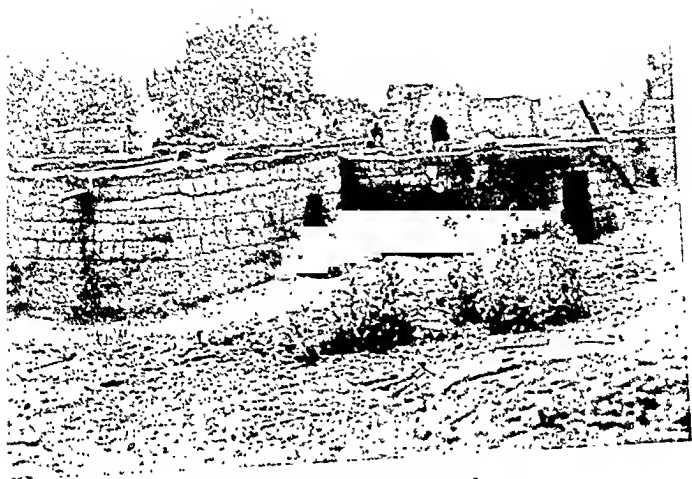


FIG. 107. A Lobi compound

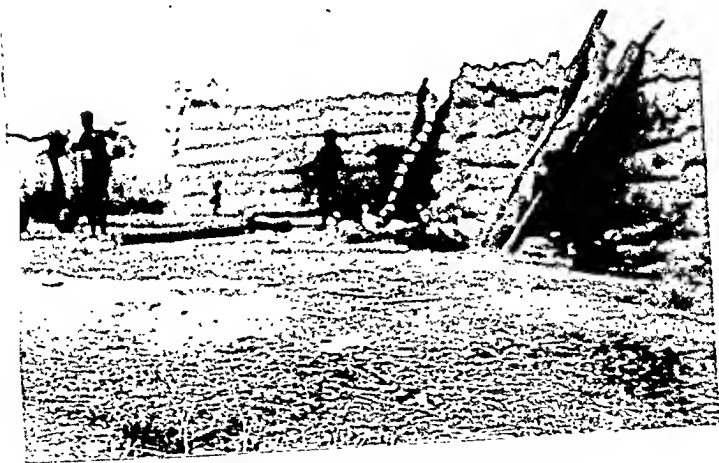


FIG. 108. A Lobi compound

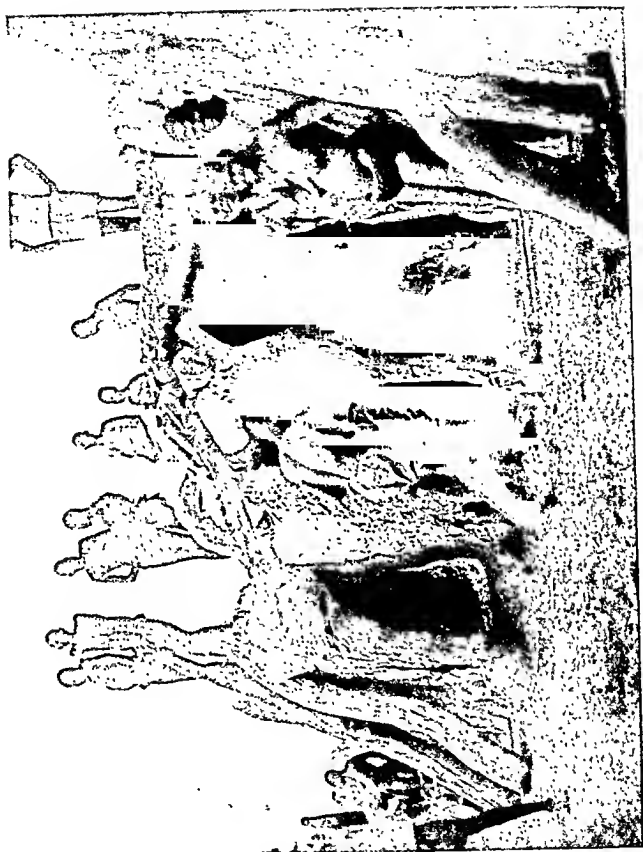


FIG. 109. A Lobi compound

with section-heads, a social grouping with which we are now familiar. The head of the clan was the *Teygan-sob*, possessor of the groves, also called *Teysob* (owner of the land). His position and functions will be described presently.

The clan settlements are widely scattered; the compound huts are flat-roofed and roughly oblong in shape (see Figs. 107-9).

*The Teysob:* *Tey* is the land. *Tiytan* (compare Isal *Tintein*) is the soil. '*Tey* is a woman. A man unites with his wife and she gives birth. The land is like that' (meaning that the rain makes the crops grow).

The *Teysob* or *Teygansob* was trustee for the land of the clan, and as his second title implies, he was in charge of the *Teygan* (Nankane *Tingane*). 'A *Teygan* is a pile of stones at the foot of trees. It is the land to which he (the *Tey-sob*) sacrifices, not the spirits of ancestors. Formerly we did not know anything about Chiefs, we did not use the word *Na* (Territorial Ruler). In case of war, the best arrow shot and bravest man took charge. In olden times any man who had many sons commanded respect, he was *Libiesob* (compare Isal *Morvietina* or *Koro*) (The rich man). When the Europeans came, these were the men who came forward to meet them with a white fowl, while the *Teysob* ran away. They (i.e. the former) became the white man's Chiefs.'

#### *Power and Duties of the Teysob in Olden Times:*

- (1) As the name implies, he was trustee for the land of the clan.
- (2) He received lost property.
- (3) He made sacrifices for rain.
- (4) He purified the land, when blood was shed.
- (5) He was given some of the first fruits.
- (6) He could put a stop to war and fighting and murder, 'because these acts would stop the rain'.
- (7) He could expel an unruly member of the clan by throwing a branch down before his door. No one dared give the offender food and water after he had done so.
- (8) He made sacrifices to the land at the groves.
- (9) He allocated uncultivated land.
- (10) He purified the land also in case of suicide. 'Formerly, the man's family had to give the *Teysob* 12,000 cowries and a goat "to sweep the land". Now, we are poor, all our cows are dead, so we only give 5,000 cowries.'

'If a man kills his own "brother" (in the classificatory sense), that

same anger will make him kill himself. If he does not kill himself, his father's spirit will surely kill him. If you are fighting and kill a stranger, that is different. You will then take a bow belonging to some one who has killed a man, sacrifice a fowl upon it and eat the sacrifice. This is called *Zer tendare gyen*. The *gyen*<sup>1</sup> of the dead man would otherwise kill the slayer. The *Teysob* will ask the slayer for a cow, a sheep, and a fowl, and 12,000 cowries that he may sweep the blood from the land (*pi ten je*). A bow that has once killed a man may not be used again; it is put up on the ceiling.'

After the harvest each year, every one brings to the *Teysob* corn and flour, and beer is made and sacrifices offered at the grove. 'When we sacrifice a fowl to a human spirit, we ask it to give to the *Tengane* who then takes it to *Nazzen* (God).'

The Lobi swear an oath by the land to bear witness to what they say is true. '*Tiytan oko me bi oko o*' (Let the soil kill me or kill him), and at the same time throwing earth on the offending party. To remove this curse, the litigants have to approach the *Teysob* with a black fowl, a chicken, and 200 cowries. The chicken is killed first, to see if it will be 'received'; next the black fowl; the blood is rubbed over the parties concerned to the accompaniment of the words, '*Tiytan na ti piri*'. The parties then bathe and are rubbed with medicine and drink three times out of a calabash, and water is splashed over their heads. The *Teysob* also owned the town. He was assisted in sacrifices by the *Soosob* (lit. he who owns the knife) who actually performed the sacrifices.<sup>2</sup> The *Wesob*<sup>3</sup> is in charge of hunting parties, but he does not own the bush. He will make a speech to the hunters before they set forth, saying:

'If we meet a lion, let it be like cold water.

'If we meet a leopard, let it be like cold water.

'If we meet a snake, let it be like cold water, but if a man wishes to quarrel while out hunting, let him get headache and belly-ache, so that he may have to return home.'

'All lost axes and knives and arrows, and animals which die without us knowing who killed them, belong to the *Wesob*.' The *Wesob* has a horn called *weco ile*. He is also known as *Garadana*.

*Succession to Teysob*: 'When a *Teysob* dies, he is succeeded by a brother. If he has no brother, his son will succeed, but in that case

<sup>1</sup> The Nankanse use the word *zen* in the same sense.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the *Bogomala* among Dagaba, and the *Venetina* among the Isala.

<sup>3</sup> Compare the duties of the *Gošana* or *Wedana*.

all lost things without an owner are sold by the son for cowries; with some of these he buys a sheep to sacrifice, the balance left over will be handed to the late *Teysob's arbile* (sister's son)<sup>1</sup> who will, however, probably return half of these to the new *Teysob*. All ordinary offerings made to the *Teysob* have nothing to do with the *arbile*. A nephew succeeds to a *Teysob's* property, failing brothers, just as if he were an ordinary man.'

'If a stranger wishes to make a new compound or farm, the *Teysob* will inquire where the place is situated, and if that piece of land belongs to some one already, he will direct him there, and if the tenant does not agree, the *Teysob* may not force him. If the land belonged to no one, the *Teysob* would allocate it himself.'

*Some Further Notes on Land Tenure:* The residence of a Lobi family, which may consist of its head (*Yi'sob*), *Yi-dana* in Nankane, and his wives and family and his brothers and their wives and family, is called *ben yiri* (So-and-so's compound). In such a household, I am informed, quarrels may arise about fowls belonging to different members of the family laying together in one nest, and this may cause the eldest son and younger brother 'to go out' (*yi*) and build themselves new compounds.

On the plan with which we are now familiar, each family in the compound (*yiri*) has its own separate quarters which are called *die*, pl. *deru* (the Nankane *deo*).<sup>2</sup> The original compound, from which the breakaways referred to above may take place, is called *yi-kpe-dem*.

The *Yi-sob* will, in his lifetime, divide up the family land, each of his brothers being given their own plot on which he and his family will work. When a man dies, his farm is divided among his sons, but if a son has 'gone out' during his father's lifetime he will not share in this division. When a man dies and leaves no son, only then will his brother take his farms. 'The reason we share out land like this is because if a man had three brothers, all of whom might have sons and if the elder brother who was family-head had not portioned out a farm to each brother while he was still alive, on the death of the brothers, the sons would all be quarrelling about the division of the land.'

*Farms and Land may comprise:*

(a) Farms some distance from the compound, called *puo*.

(b) Farms near the compound, called *samay* (Nankane *samane*).

<sup>1</sup> This very curious and interesting custom will be referred to and explained later.

<sup>2</sup> The Lobi do not have kitchen middens as a rule; all refuse is cast on the farms daily.

- (c) Uncultivated grass land (*mo puo*).
- (d) Land uncultivated in the more remote bush (*waja*).
- (e) Old farms, now abandoned (*puo kora*, lit. old farm).
- (f) *Kar*, unfertile land, generally left uncultivated near a town; cattle graze upon it.

All uncultivated land, not allocated to any particular family, is common to the clan. All edible fruit trees growing on land which has a tenant, belong to that tenant. All such growing on *mo puo* or *waja* are communal.

Any one making a new farm on land hitherto uncultivated will inform the *Teysob* that he is about to do so. 'No man can sell land.'

A farmer will make a vow (*ko nor*) that if his crops are good, he will give some to the land. 'A *Teysob* may not interfere with any man's land.'

THE LOBER (*continued*)*Property and Inheritance. Cross-cousin and other Marriages*

THE devolution of property among this tribe presents some novel features of considerable interest and importance. The Lobi would appear to have reached a kind of transition stage between a matrilineal and a patrilineal social organization. The change over to the latter has begun, but the links with the older system are as yet by no means completely severed.

As we have seen, in one respect, the transition is complete—the son belongs to the clan—that is totemic group—of his father, not of his mother, or as I should prefer to put it, for reasons which will be explained later, of his maternal uncle. In spite of this important breakaway from the older traditions, we are confronted with the rather remarkable fact, that inheritance of property is still through the sister's son, though here again we find that time and changes are causing the full practice of this custom to become irksome, and it will not be long, I believe, before the Lobi also follow the system now in force among their near neighbours.

*Order of Succession among the Lobi:* Brothers and sisters and half-brothers and half-sisters of the same *bello* (blood-group) as the deceased inherit equally, a senior female excluding a junior male. Half-brothers and half-sisters by the same father but by co-wives of a different *bello* cannot succeed to each other's property, e.g. *X*, the ancestor, has married two wives; by the first he has a son *A*, by the second a son *B*, again by the first he has another son *C*, who may be much younger than *B*. *A* has inherited property (through his mother's side of the family); he dies; his heir is eventually *C*, not *B*, but if *C* is very young *B* will look after *C*'s property until *C* is old enough to do so himself.

In cases where a sister is older than any of her brothers, or half-uterine brothers, the female takes the property, not her younger brother, but the latter will look after it for her, but he is responsible to his sister for every cowrie, and he may not kill even a cow without her permission and authority.

When all the above are exhausted the son of the eldest sister or



uterine half-sister inherits.<sup>1</sup> He is called *arbile* and is the nephew of the deceased. The same word *arbile* is also used for maternal uncle. Sister's son implies the son of the eldest sister irrespective of the son's age, e.g. a son of a younger sister might conceivably be very much older than the son of her senior sister, but the younger son of the latter succeeds; his elder 'brother' would administer the estate if the former was too young to do so.

I received the following answer in reply to the question, 'If the brothers are all dead, and an elder sister who has no son succeeds to the exclusion of her younger sister's son, who administers the property?' *Ans.*: 'If the two sisters<sup>2</sup> happen to live in the same town, the son of the younger sister will look after the cows for his small mother, otherwise the husband of the elder sister will do so, but he has no power over his wife's property by doing so.'

The above general rules for the devolution of property will now be examined in detail and the exceptions noted. Although it is true that the eldest son is not the heir, nevertheless there are certain items in his father's estate to which he has a claim, and others over which, in certain circumstances, he will continue to exercise, at least, a nominal and supervisory interest. Eldest son in this sense has a rather peculiar meaning. Hitherto, we have seen it to mean the eldest among the sons of a group of brothers all of whom are equally 'sons' to all the brothers. Among the Lobi, however, eldest son here means the eldest son of the eldest brother by his senior wife, even if he is much younger than a son by a junior wife. The latter, among the Lobi, calls his brother, who is really older than himself, 'younger brother'. This son then will take his father's spirit, which after death will have a roughly carved anthropomorphic-shaped stick, *sa-da*, made for a shrine (see Figs. 110 and 111). He will also take his late father's farm (see p. 431), and in some cases the following standing crops, corn, beans, rice, and peas. (Ground-nuts and yams in the farm are sold and proceeds go to the true heir and will continue to do so until the final funeral custom has been held.) The son will also take all his father's privately acquired shrines and 'medicines' (fetishes), and what is more, any property

<sup>1</sup> 'He succeeds because if his mother had been alive, she would have succeeded to the property.'

<sup>2</sup> I asked if a man usually married his wife's sister and every one burst out laughing. They said such a woman belonged to the husband if unmarried, and if your wife loved you at all, she would bring her sister to you. Even if married, you would not scruple to have intercourse with her, but would run from her husband if discovered and later pacify him with a goat.



FIG. 110. Lobi *sa-da*



FIG. 111. The Chief of Lawra with his father's

owned by these shrines. 'A shrine may become rich by the offerings made to it; the sister's son could not take this, or the shrine, which remained with the son, would kill him.'

*Children:* If deceased had a brother, who is of course heir, these present no difficulty; if, however, there are no surviving brothers (or sisters), the children remain at their late father's compound and follow their father's clan taboos. Even if their mother goes elsewhere to marry,<sup>1</sup> but the *arbile*, who is the heir, exercises certain rights over them and is under certain obligations. In case of a boy, he has to find him a wife; in case of girls, the *arbile* will receive one-third of the *kyerefo* (bride-price), the girl's mother receiving two-thirds, which she gives to her brother, the girl's maternal uncle. The *arbile*, however, takes the whole of the *dol* (cows).

If any of the deceased's sons kill an animal while hunting, the *arbile* will receive a hind leg, and also a hind leg of each sacrifice made by a son to his father's spirit. All this refers to a case where the heir is a sister's son, not when the deceased left a brother or sister who becomes heir.

A father may make his own son gifts when still alive. Such gifts are made publicly, and after his death the nephew may not touch them. 'If a man hides his father's property to prevent the sister's son from taking it when he dies, in order to give to his son, he, the son, will die.'<sup>2</sup>

'The son of the deceased, when the brothers are all dead, assumes charge of the family compound; the sister's son never comes to live there. If this compound is not too far from that of the sister's son (the heir), the latter may even leave some of the live stock which he has inherited in charge of the deceased's son. If one dies, however, this son has "to drag it" to the sister's son. If he tried to eat it secretly, he would die.'

One arrow out of a father's quiver is given to each son of the deceased and 100 cowries. One fowl, one pair of trousers, one robe, and one cloth are also given to the eldest son by the *arbile*.

*Inheritance of Property of a Teysob:* As we have already seen,<sup>3</sup> the office of *Teysob* is an hereditary one; brother succeeds brother, and in the event of all the brothers being dead, then the son succeeds to his office. A *Teysob's* property, however, devolves in the ordinary way upon his sister's son. Among the Lobi, the sister's son, i.e. nephew

<sup>1</sup> The position of the widows will be discussed presently.

<sup>2</sup> But apparently a father may do so; see p. 448.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 429.

of a *Teysob*, has the title of *Zo'-mogere* (Eater of dry flour). This office always descends (when brothers are exhausted) to a sister's son. A *zo'-mogere*, besides inheriting his uncle's (the *Teysob's*) property, did, I am convinced, in the past also inherit his office, thus completing the link in the matrilineal social system. This, I think, is proved by the fact that he has the right to the leg of all sacrifices of lost live stock made to the land, that lost iron goes to the *zo'-mogere*, not to the *Teysob*, and that the *zo'-mogere* attends all sacrifices at the *Teygan* (groves).

*Inheritance by Sister's Son:* We have seen, that when a man's 'son' is spoken of in connexion with certain rights of inheritance which he enjoys, that the eldest 'son' of the senior wife is the one to whom reference is made. When we come to consider the question of inheritance (as the heir) by a sister's son, a new interpretation has to be given to the word 'son'. A Lobi may marry two sisters; his senior wife may be the younger of the two, and if he has a son by her, that son, for purposes of inheritance, *vis-à-vis* his father, is senior to his elder brother, the son of the elder sister. When it comes to these brothers succeeding to *family* property, however, the reverse is the case. The status of the mother is now viewed, not from the standpoint of her seniority in her husband's *ménage*, but in her own blood-group (*bello*), and therefore the eldest son of the elder sister (not of the senior wife) is heir to any family property that may come his way.

*Cross-cousin Marriages:* Cross-cousin marriages and inheritance of property, as I long ago suspected in the case of the Ashanti, are here intimately associated. My Lobi informants stated: 'A father will try to get his sister's child as a wife for his son. When he approaches her (his sister's) husband, he will say, "If you get a bitch from some one, and it has pups, and the man who gave you the bitch asks for a pup, do you refuse?"' The father pays 50,000 cowries to his sister's husband after the girl has been handed over.'

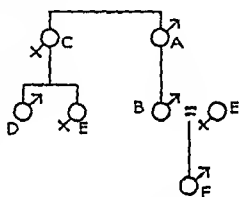
These cross-cousin marriages are arranged from childhood by the respective parents. 'The girl's mother takes the whole of the bride-price,<sup>1</sup> "because a mother owns female children, a father owns male children". A father is responsible for finding one wife for his son; a second wife will be paid for by his mother's brother, i.e. his maternal uncle.' 'I have', said my informant, 'a right to take my own sister's daughter and give her to my son. My son has a right to my wife's brother's daughter.'

<sup>1</sup> But the son-in-law will farm for his father-in-law and repair his house.

As we shall see, when discussing marriage customs, this appears to be the ordinary form of union. Any other marriage appears to be a mild form of marriage by capture on the part of the son himself. 'A man may "steal" a wife for himself, but not for his son.' Again, 'My son has a right to take his uncle's things (e.g. his cow), or his daughter. His uncle may be angry, but that is all. He, my son, will beg his pardon. If my son takes his uncle's daughter when she is already married to some one else, and her husband goes to him and complains, my son's uncle will tell him that he and my son are both rascals, and he will hand him back the bride-price (*yaye*).

'We all try to get our sons to marry our sister's daughters. A man's father dies, his property will be inherited (eventually) by his sister's son, but after his death and that of his brothers it will come to his own son, and the father will benefit as the son will not let his father be poor.' The following diagram will make this clear.

Explanation: B marries his father's sister's daughter E. A dies; his property will eventually pass to his sister's (C's) son D, but later it will again pass to his sister's (E's, who has married B) son F; B, who has lost his father A and his father's property, will thus benefit indirectly.



Marriage with a wife's sister's daughter, although not forbidden, is not, among some clans, considered quite correct. 'If I married my wife's sister's daughter, and my wife and she were to quarrel, my wife would upbraid her saying, "Was it not I who bore you?" and people would also laugh at me and say you have married a woman and her daughter.'

The Lobi of Tiolo informed me, however, that they often married such a woman, and that a wife would herself bring her to you (compare Nankane *pogo-soo*).

## XLVIII

### THE LOBER (*continued*)

#### *Rites de Passage*

**CONCEPTION and Birth:** It is not a taboo to inform a Lobi woman that she has conceived.<sup>1</sup> If a woman has been unfaithful to her husband and has not confessed, 'she will die in child-birth'. If she has confessed, the adulterer will bring a fowl and 200 cowries; the fowl is sacrificed—on the husband's father's *sa da* (shrine)—by the husband's elder brother. (I here asked my informant if a man has access to his brother's wife. He replied, 'Even if my brother slept on the same mat as my wife, I would know he had not had intercourse with her, but nevertheless my children are his and his are mine.')

When a child is born, the afterbirth is burned outside, and when the navel string falls off, it is put in an old cradle (*ku*)<sup>2</sup> (see Figs. 112 and 113) which is carried outside by the mother, along a path, placed on the ground and broken up, and a stone placed on top. All the refuse, ashes, &c., out of the confinement hut are thrown away at the same place at the same time. On the sixth day after birth, the infant is taken outside for the first time. The old woman who had assisted at the confinement takes the infant outside and climbs with it on to the flat roof, the mother passes outside the compound and the child is then handed down to another woman who hands it to the mother, who then brings it back into the house. That day it receives a name. Each month, a little of the hair of the mother's head is shaved off, and the third or fourth month—according to the sex of the child—the whole of her head is shaved.

Every child has a *sera*, guardian spirit (compare *segere*) which is propitiated after conception, and after birth. When a child falls sick, the *boga*, soothsayer (compare *baga*), will trace the cause to some offence committed against the *sega*. When an infant dies it is buried outside the compound after the soothsayer has been consulted; there is not any funeral custom; the parents will resume cohabitation<sup>3</sup> after having shaved their heads.

<sup>1</sup> Among the neighbouring tribe, the Wala, where a very similar custom to that already described among the Dagaba is performed, it is taboo to do so.

<sup>2</sup> The Lobi mothers carry their children about in cradles slung over their shoulders.

<sup>3</sup> They would not otherwise do so until after the child is weaned. A man and woman who break this rule are ridiculed.

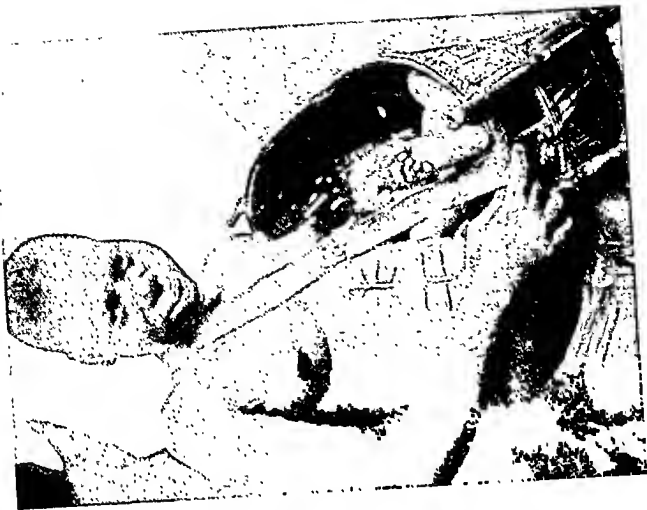


FIG. 113. Lobi baby in cradle



FIG. 112. Lobi mother and cradle

A female child has her clitoris cut out (by a woman) about the age of five or six years. 'If this were not done, there would not be room for a man to have connexion with a woman.'

*Twins*: They must be treated alike. Twins are called *sore*, pl. *soba*, in Loberu. 'When they grow up, they themselves will point out a tree whose roots will be taken and a fowl sacrificed upon them.'

*Marriage Customs*: When a man's son is about ten years old, his father will begin to look out for a wife for him. This may be his sister's daughter, or his wife's brother's daughter. He sends a messenger, who is known as '*potule*', to the parents of the girl with from 100-500 cowries (called *berefo*),<sup>1</sup> according to his wealth. The father sends for his daughter and informs her, and if she remains silent, that means that she consents. If she does not agree she will say, '*Ma ba kyene be*' (I will not go there). When the first rain falls, the *potule* returns again to the girl's village saying that he has come for the girl. The *potule* is then set to work on the farm of the girl's father for three days, and on the third day the girl's parents make beer and kill a fowl for him, and he goes off with the girl. She will remain at the 'husband's' compound the whole of the following wet season, sleeping with his sisters or his mother. She will work on her boy husband's farm. Her husband will also send about twenty to fifty men to work for a day or two on his father-in-law's farm. When the harvest has been gathered in, the girl returns home, taking with her a basket of grain, a live guinea-fowl, and a guinea-fowl made into soup. She is escorted back to her parents' home by the *potule*. This ceremony is known as *lobie*.<sup>2</sup> The girl will now remain at her parents' compound until the following wet season, when the *potule* again goes to fetch her, being again caught for three days' work, after which he again takes the girl away to her husband's village for the whole of the ensuing wet season.

This going and coming is repeated until the girl reaches puberty. When this happens, the *potule* is again sent to her village with a sum of from 10,000-15,000 cowries. The *dogoro* of the girl are summoned and the cowries are counted out and divided, one-third to the *dogoro*, two-thirds to the girl's mother, who will hand it to her brother, or if she has no brother, to her mother's brother. These cowries are known as the *kyerefo*—they are the bride-price. The *berefo* is given to show that the girl belongs to a clansman of another clan, and its

<sup>1</sup> The *berefo* makes the marriage binding even at this stage.

<sup>2</sup> *Bello* in Nankane, is the name given to the first time a wife revisits her parents' compound after marriage.



acceptance indicates that the girl's parents have agreed to the betrothal. A girl's mother will always complain that the *kyerefo* is insufficient, and the *potule* will then return for another 3,000 cowries.

A day will now be arranged for the *potule* to return to fetch the bride. When the day arrives and he goes to bring her, her father will say, 'Look, the sticks (supports) of my roof are all broken, and the walls are too low and I am always knocking my head'. He will speak thus, even if his house is in quite good condition. The *potule* will return and report to the father of the youth, and he will collect, perhaps, a hundred men, and they will go and work on the house for several days, during which time they are fed by the girl's parents. When this work is finished, the *potule* will return and fetch the bride, who will only be accompanied part of the way by her relations. From now onwards, the bride's husband will continue to work on his father-in-law's farm, for, if he stopped doing so, her parents might take their daughter away. As soon, however, as the girl conceives, he will cease doing so, for he will feel his position assured. When the child is born and is beginning to walk, the girl's parents will call their daughter to their village; this is a hint that the payment of the cows (*doe*) is expected. The parents have to be careful that they do not claim the cows if their daughter becomes again *enceinte*; in such a case, they will have to wait for them another three or four years. For this reason, once she has returned to her parents' village, her husband is forbidden to have intercourse with her there, or she might again conceive and thus delay the settlement of the cows.

In the event of the death of a man's wife, if his father-in-law is a 'bad man' he will claim the *doe* even before she is buried. He will send the son-in-law a rope, as a hint to lead the cows back. If, however, he is a 'good man' and if his daughter has borne a female child, he may wait until the husband has received the cows for this daughter, with which, when he does so, he will pay the former debt. *Berefo* is like earnest money. *Kyerefo* is the bride-price; it entitles a man to keep the children even if the *doe* has not been paid. If the *doe* is not paid, the wife's parents have a right to take back their daughter, but not the children, provided the *kyerefo* has been paid. On divorce, a husband can claim back the *doe* and *kyerefo*, but if he has children, he leaves the *berefo* unclaimed.

*Funeral Customs:* When a man becomes very ill, his *arbile* (nephew), and his *arbile's* mother (that is his sister) and her husband are sent for.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is assuming he had not any brothers surviving.

The sick man tells them what he owes and what is owing to him, what live stock and cowries he possesses and what gifts he has given or wishes to give his sons.<sup>1</sup> (Such gifts in Loberu are called *gu-yiri*, guard the house.) They will then all return home except his sister. She and one of his wives will nurse him until he dies. It is considered a disgrace to allow any one to die lying down;<sup>2</sup> he must die supported by some one. Should a man ever have killed or murdered any one,<sup>3</sup> he is allowed to die lying on a mat. In such a case, other clansmen who have also killed their man (*zadem*) come into the room after he is dead and kill a new hatched fowl and let its blood fall upon the left upper arm of the corpse and cut three patches of hair from the back of his head. They then rush out and raise the war cry, while others climb the flat roofs with bows and arrows and blow whistles. The women may then come and raise up the corpse.

The corpse is bathed by women, but the real sisters and wives are not allowed to do so, or they would 'bite the body in order that they too might die'. When a wife continues, in spite of opposition, to bite the corpse of her late husband, she is fastened leg to leg with the dead body; the cord binding them is then cut and an egg broken upon it to the accompaniment of the words, 'You wished to follow your husband, but we separate you'. 'This is the reason we tie women up at funerals (see Fig. 102) and also to prevent them beating their heads against a wall.'

The corpse is now dressed, but everything put on it is turned inside out and all pockets are cut off. Colours are taboo to a corpse, except a tall red fez. The pockets are cut out lest the dead takes anything away with him. If these precautions were not taken, 'rain would cease to fall and the sextons (*ya-turibe*, lit. grave-diggers) would become lepers'.

*The Gan-yi* (lit. *step over and go out*) Ceremony: As soon as the corpse is washed and dressed, it is carried outside the compound and set up on a raised platform (compare Dagaba, see Fig. 98). As the body is being carried out, a cow is killed at the doorway by one of the *dogero*, and those carrying the body step over it. The *dogero* of the deceased get the meat of this animal. The body is set up cross-legged (with feet

<sup>1</sup> Compare the Ashanti *samansie*.

<sup>2</sup> The Nankanse have a similar custom. Among them, and also the Isala, it is considered disgraceful ever to allow a man to die lying down. Such a corpse is called *kyi-yele* (Nankane), *So-kpan* in Isal, and may not be moved until the sextons have sprinkled medicine on it and until certain fees are paid them for so doing.

<sup>3</sup> Such an one is called *za-sob*.

straight out if a female). A bow<sup>1</sup> is placed in his left hand and his quiver is hung over his left shoulder, or beside him.

The mourning goes on all night. Relations who are likely to hurt themselves are either bound with ropes round their waists or held by the wrists. Men lament saying, 'Sa wai' (Alas my father). Women wail saying, 'Wo, wo, wi, wi, weel'

'The Lobi do not sing at funerals as the Dagaba do.'

*The People who attend a Funeral Custom:* (a) All the *dogero* of the deceased, even from remote 'villages'; (b) All the *bello* (blood relations).

If the deceased had killed a man, or men, the bows which he had used are bound together and stuck up on the ground and a dog is tied up beside them. This is done by men who have themselves taken a human life, and belong to a kind of 'murderers' society'. Any one who is a member of this fraternity may come forward and kick over the bows, whereupon 'every one then knows that one is a man'. The dog is later sacrificed over the bows. These bows do not go to the heir (the *arbile*) but are kept with other bows in the hut of the head of the *dogero*. The dog may only be eaten by those who have killed some one.

*The Kye-nab-kukur Ceremony:* The word means literally, 'The cow cut for the hoe handle'. If the deceased has acquired cows through the proceeds of farming and exchange for crops, one of them is taken and a hind leg and the opposite fore-leg are broken and the maimed animal left lying beside the corpse until it is buried. This cow is eventually eaten by the *dogero* of the deceased who have come from other 'towns'. If the deceased had been a soothsayer (*bag'bugere* in Loberu) other *bagabe* take his soothsayer's bag and walk three times round the corpse and empty the contents of the bag (see Chapter XXIX) on the ground. One then takes the wand and a second holds it, and they consult about the cause of the death. Later, after the second funeral custom, this bag will be taken by the senior soothsayer and its contents will be divided up among all the soothsayers of his clan. If the deceased had a sister or a daughter married elsewhere, their husbands will attend the funeral bringing a pot of beer and a fowl.

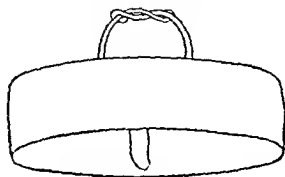
<sup>1</sup> If the deceased had killed a man during his lifetime with an arrow, the bow he fired the arrow with is never used again. It is hung up in a dark corner of his hut and no one must touch it. Such a bow is called *za-tandere*. The bow 'string' (called *tan-mir*), a strip of bamboo, is removed and put on a new bow. After the funeral custom, this bow has a fowl sacrificed over it by some one who has also killed a man, after which 'it will not hurt any one touching it'. The son eats the sacrifice and keeps the bow.

The latter will be hung up in a basket beside the corpse and the former is placed in the room formerly occupied by the deceased. Cowries are scattered for the xylophone players and the sextons<sup>1</sup> and others not related to the deceased (*yare libie*, cowrie-scattering). These gifts are not to be confused with what is known as *kore kuo* (lit. funeral water) which are contributions towards the funeral expenses given to the *kore-sob* (the one in charge of the funeral). On the day when the corpse is interred, the heads of compounds also give 20 cowries to the *kore-sob* for distribution among the xylophone players; these gifts are known as *kuyare* (the dispersal of the mourners).

So far, the rites described have occupied one day and night. The next morning, the *dogero* of the deceased buy beer and distribute it among the mourners. Another cow has its hind legs broken and is laid beside the first. The *arbile* (who in this case is the heir) calls the 'son' of the deceased and inquires about his father's cowries, saying he would like to have two or three pots full (*yoge*) to scatter. This money has been buried. It is dug up and counted out in piles of 1,000 each by members of the deceased's *bello*. The *arbile* gives each widow 2,000, and each child of the deceased 3,000, and his *bello* will take 1,000 each. All this money is for scattering. Some is scattered near to where the corpse is. 'That is for the sextons, and others do not try to get it.' The rest is for the *gyilli* (zylophone) players and the general public who have come to attend the funeral.

*The Betebe Ceremony*: If the deceased had belonged to the Kushele or Behone *dogero*, then, about midday, the seniors of the *dogero* collect in one hut. The son of the dead man brings a black goat and a black hen. They are killed by putting medicine down their throats. Besides these Elders, a daughter of the deceased is also present. Every one holds 'medicine', made of ground and charred roots, in the left hand. Every one who can get near enough now touches the goat or hen, and those who cannot approach sufficiently close to do so, establish a contact by touching those who have done so. They then begin to sing to the accompaniment of small iron bells (shaped thus.

<i>Kwen we be,</i>	If the spirit is there,
<i>Uko,</i>	Let it kill.
<i>Kwen we be,</i>	If the spirit is there,
<i>Uko.</i>	Let it kill.



<sup>1</sup> In the Lobi dialect spoken at Tiole, sextons are called *yaunubo*.

The goat and the cock immediately die and are set aside to be cooked later.<sup>1</sup> Certain persons now begin to perform; 'some eat fire; some pierce their tongue with an arrow; some swallow knives and cowries and pull them out of the anus with a thread; some swing calabashes of water round their heads without spilling any'. While these things are going on, they sing:

'*Kushele yina bumbiere be cha*' (We Kushele have come forth, nothing can harm us).

Wooden figures of *Betibe* are now carried out on the shoulders of four men and are set up on the ground before the corpse, one behind the other; a male, then a female, then a male, then a female.

*The Helu or Molfo Custom:*<sup>2</sup> If the deceased had a great friend, this friend will come, and after placing a pot of beer in the hut of the deceased, will stand before the corpse holding a fowl in his hand. Every one will be silent while he speaks as follows:

'This man was my friend.'

All the *dogero* of the deceased will repeat, 'This man was my friend'. He continues:

'I used to visit him' (all repeat).

'He looked after me well' (all repeat).

'To-day he is dead' (all repeat).

'I have taken a fowl' (all repeat).

'And an arrow' (all repeat).

'And twenty cowries' (all repeat).

'To give you' (all repeat).

'Receive twenty cowries' (all repeat).

'When you reach the river' (all repeat).

'And the canoe men bid you pay' (all repeat).

'Give them these twenty cowries' (all repeat).

He then holds the fowl aloft and says:

'If there is any one who wishes to be a friend to me, let him come and take this fowl.' He repeats this four times. If any one comes forward, he takes the fowl, beats its head on the ground and lays it beside the body of his friend.

<sup>1</sup> Before this ceremony in the hut, the clansmen have taken some medicine, placed it on the palms of their hands, circled the corpse three times, and blown (*pebele*) the medicine from their palms. 'The power of the dead man's "medicine" is thus spoiled, and he is prevented taking it away with him.'

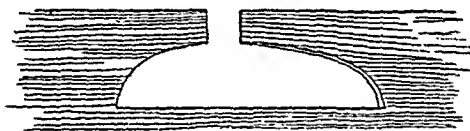
<sup>2</sup> *Helu*, derivation *be*, to call out; *molfo*, possibly the same root as the Mole, *mane*, to proclaim.

About 4 p.m. a small xylophone, known as *lob bun*, is sounded, and all the mourners, except the *dogero* of the deceased, cease dancing. The latter then dance a dance called *derfo* (Nankane *dea*)—a war-dance. The xylophones are silent while they dance, the players being given a cowrie as a signal to cease playing. Arrows are taken out of the dead man's quiver and held in the teeth while they dance, and one is shot from a bow into the bush.

On the following day, the custom called *ko-yoro* (lit. funeral hunting) is held. Forty or fifty men armed with bows and arrows and sticks (*dakora*) set off to the bush to kill a hare or a duyker which is brought back and placed before the dead body and a war-dance again performed round it.

A man may be buried, (a) inside his own sleeping-room (if he is head of a compound); (b) in the *da vura* (the small yard just outside the hut); (c) in the *de nore* (*za nore* in Nankane), i.e. just outside the entrance of the compound.

*The Grave: Ta*, pl. *yars*. Five to ten persons may be buried in one grave, which is shaped somewhat like this:



A male is buried facing east, a female facing west.

'A man faces eastward, that he may know when to rise to hunt; a woman looks to the west, that she may know when to prepare her husband's food.'

*Making of a New Grave:* The *kur-sob* (lit. he who owns the funeral) gives the sextons a fowl and a new calabash. They lay this calabash down on the spot chosen for the grave, and ashes are sprinkled round it. The fowl is then killed and its blood also sprinkled round the calabash. Three sextons each take an axe and turn up the soil three times (four if the grave is for a woman) after which the grave is dug. If they are not able to finish digging the grave in one day, they are careful to cover up the entrance with a stone and thorns to keep out wandering *sis*, souls (s. *sia*).

*Actual Burial:* On the actual day of interment, the two cows, which have been lying with broken legs, are killed, one for the *dogero*, the other for the *bello*. The corpse is carried to the grave-side by the

sextons, where it is set down. A sexton then enters the grave, and the corpse is lowered feet first, and laid lying on the right side (left, if a woman), with the right hand under the cheek and the left across the chest. Ashes are then sprinkled; a fire is lit, and peppers placed on it. This is done to drive out any souls of the living that may have wandered into the grave. It is the business of the deceased's *dogero*, not of his *bello*, to see that the dead is properly buried. For this purpose, a sexton from the deceased's *dogero* will always make a final inspection before the grave is filled in. Iron or silver may not be buried in a grave, because, 'should the metal become rusty, rain would not fall'. Nothing is buried with the body but the clothes in which it is dressed; any rings or ornaments are removed. Weapons are not put in the grave; the fact that they were placed beside the corpse before burial enables the dead to take them with him. Food is not placed in a grave; some food is set down beside the body before burial and a little beer poured out before it, that is all. If the deceased were a hunter, some antelope horns, surrounded by a small fence, are laid beside his grave, the mouth of which is closed with an inverted pot, over which mud is plastered. Sextons, after the interment, bathe at the graveside. The calabash which was used to mark out the grave becomes their property.

After the body has been buried, three or four old women mix white clay (*yag pela*) and rub it all over the widows who have fasted that day. The widows put on head-bands called *pokor mir* (widows' strings), which are not to be confused with the bands often worn at funerals 'to prevent headaches'. They continue to wear these *pokor mir* until the second funeral custom which is known as *ko-dam-bara* (lit. end of funeral beer).<sup>1</sup>

The widows remain in the compound of their late husband, and, along with any children, are looked after by the son of the deceased. During the funeral, the children of the deceased have worn a string of cowries over the right shoulder and under the left arm. On no account must any one have sexual intercourse with widows before the final funeral custom has been held. If any one does so, 'both he and the woman will die' (killed by a sickness called *poko nyano* in Loberu, *yohal* in Isal, and *gaba* in Nankane).

The three stages<sup>2</sup> in a Lobi funeral are:

(1) *Kure* (the actual burial).

<sup>1</sup> Compare the Nankane *ku wure* or *nyoa*.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Nankanse, *kumasere*, *da zelego*, and *kuwure* or *nyoa* (burning).

(2) *Ko-dam-tuo*.

(3) *Ko-dam-bara* or *maro*.

A month or so after the burial (*kure*), the *dogero* of the deceased take a cow which had belonged to him and kill it and share it. This cow is known as *nabars*. The time for holding the *ko-dam-tuo* depends on the new crops, e.g. if a man dies in November, the *ko-dam-tuo* will be held a year later. A day is fixed upon for making beer by the women of the deceased's compound. To this ceremony come, sons-in-law (*dem*), the *arbile* (sisters' sons), and friends, all bringing fowls and beer. They assemble at the compound of the deceased.

*The Vo ko da Ceremony*: Before this beer is drunk, the walking-stick of the deceased is set up against the wall of his hut, and various offerings made to it, of fowls, yams, ground-nuts, and cowries. All these things become the property of the *dogero* of the deceased. Everyone mourns, but the property is not yet divided up. The widows bathe and wash off the white clay<sup>1</sup> and anoint themselves with oil, but continue to wear the *poko-mir*. They change their white waist-strings (*mi'pele*) for dark coloured ones (*mi'sable*), which hang down before them. They may not yet, however, marry. About six months later (or a year if the dead had been a soothsayer, because it must await the new crops) the *ko-dam-bara* is held. Beer is made, and again sacrifices are made to the stick of the deceased. The widows remove the *poko-mir* and the *mi'sable* bands and put on beads and dress up. The relations of the widows come and dance. A rude image of the deceased is carved in wood (see Fig. 111). This is called *sa-da* (father's stick); it is made by one of the *bello* (blood-group) who has been selected by a soothsayer to do so, 'because the spirit loves him'. This shrine is handed over to the son.

No sooner do the relations of the widows arrive, than they begin to seize fowls (compare the Nankanse custom). After they have seized about ten, they are begged to desist, and return some of them. The 'brothers' of the widows make a pretence of taking their sisters off home and are begged not to do so. On the third day of the ceremony the sons of the deceased bring a sheep and a goat and make food for the *bello* relations, who are informed by one of the sons that they may 'come on the morrow and take my father's quiver' (*IVa beog wa de n'sa lok*). Next day, the *bello* of the deceased, including the *arbile*

<sup>1</sup> Put on a year before. The Lobe have the reputation among all neighbouring tribes of being very dirty.



(sister's son) arrive and go to the deceased's hut where they are given beer and meat and grain-food. The son then brings his late father's clothes, bows, quiver, axes, hoes, and lays them in front of the *bello*. If the dead man had ever bought bangles for his wives, these too will be brought and also his cowries. One of the *bello* will now remove the arrows from the quiver and hand one to each of his blood-group, also one each to the eldest son of each of the deceased's wives, and also give 20 and 100 cowries respectively to each class of these recipients. The head of the *bello* also receives one hind leg of the goat, the skin, 500 cowries, and a hoe. The *arbile* (sister's son), in this case, the heir, takes the rest. If the deceased had fowls and guinea-fowls, these will have been brought with the articles already enumerated. One axe, one hoe, one fowl, one robe, and one cloth are presented to the eldest son by the *arbile*. All the *bello* now return home, the *arbile* taking away his property with the exception of any clothes, which he asks the son himself to bring. A few days later he will do so, when the *arbile* will make inquiries about his father's live stock and buried cowries. The son will disclose all, with the exception of any cowries which his late father had hidden, and instructed his son, on pain of death, not to reveal. These cowries the father had, before his death, coughed and spat upon and declared, 'Let any one except my son who takes these cowries, die of a cough like this'.

About a month later, the heir (the *arbile*) will come again to his late uncle's compound, when he is shown all the live stock and the place where the cowries are buried in a pot. The *arbile* will drive off to his compound some, but not all, of the live stock. From time to time he will come and take what he requires from the remainder, thus not leaving the son destitute all at once. The *arbile* will also send his wife for some, not all, of the buried cowries. He may leave some with the son even for ten years.

The widows, after the *ko-dam-bara*, are free to go to their parents for a time. Their children, unless very young, will remain at the house of their late father. Both the widows and children, however, belong to the *arbile*. These widows may, and probably will, be taken by the heir, whose property they are. If he marries them, they will probably leave their late husband's compound,<sup>1</sup> and their children by the first husband, and go and live at the heir's compound, and any children

<sup>1</sup> Among some of the clans, the widows, even when the heir takes them, remain at the compound of the late husband, in which case the heir does not pay *berefo*, and any children he may have by them belong to the *dogero* of the late husband.

they may have by him will belong to his *dogero*. In such a case the heir must pay 500 cowries to the widows' fathers. If the heir did not do so, any children he might have by them would belong to the *dogero* of the late husband. If the widows do not marry the heir (they seem to have some choice in the matter) they may then marry:

(a) Some one of the heir's *bello*.

(b) Some one outside that *bello*.

In case (a), the new husband or husbands will pay 500 cowries to the women's fathers, in case (b) he will have to pay the full bride-price (*kyerefo*) and cows, but any children by the first husband do not belong to him. The bride-price and cows will be received by the widow's father, but he will hand all over to the heir. This custom is interesting, as it shows the heir's right to these women, which, however, in the event of males of his blood-group marrying them, he no longer enforces.

Widows, again, may remain in the compound of the late husband and there receive 'lovers' and continue to bear children, which are then regarded as children of the ghost husband, i.e. *kpem bie* (spirit's children).

*The Children of the Deceased*: Their position has already been explained (see p. 435).

*Funeral Custom of a Woman*: The ceremony is very similar to the above. The body is dressed in trousers, facing west. A woman may be buried in the same grave as her husband.

There does not appear to be any second funeral custom at the parents' home for a married woman, but the woman's parents must be informed of her death, in order that they may come and 'remove her avoidances' (totem?).

*Man Dying of Small-pox*: He is buried in an ordinary oblong grave which is then filled in completely. No one must cultivate near where such a one is buried.

*Infant's Funeral*: The body is buried at the cross-roads leading to the mother's 'town'. Sickly and deformed children were, I understood, formerly killed by one of the *bello* of the mother, during the absence of its parents. When an infant dies, the parents leave the compound for a few days (two days and nights) 'in case the dead infant should return again into the mother's belly, only to die again'. The parents shave the whole of their heads.

*Some Notes made at Tioli concerning Funeral Customs*: When a man dies

who, in his lifetime, has killed any one, only those who have killed a man are permitted to touch the corpse. The body is not bathed or oiled.<sup>1</sup> 'If you wash the corpse, it will cause a heavy tornado.'

The body is put on a mat, naked, except for a loin-cloth (a triangular strip identical with that seen in Fig. 49), ornaments, waist-beads, ear-rings,<sup>2</sup> and an *nyawie* (see Fig. 118), but any medicine (fetishes) which he used to wear are removed. The corpse is taken outside and set on a pot full of grain (the grain is later given to the fowls) and mats are rolled up and placed behind it to support it. A rich man has a pot of cowries placed on his lap. No cow is killed at the doorway as previously described. The quiver is hung on the left shoulder and his bow placed in his left hand; the feet rest on a large earthen plate. A cow<sup>3</sup> whose legs are broken, as described, is placed beside the bow; its tail is also cut off and used as a fly switch by the old women of the town.

'We do not tie ropes round the relatives, only those who have learned this custom from the Dagaba do so.'

Before a man buries his wife, her relations will encircle the corpse four times; every one else is driven away. After the fourth circuit, they will bring palms and sweep them with a downward movement over the corpse.

'A *sada* is not made until about three years after the death.'

*Spirits sacrificed to:* (a) Father, (b) Mother's brother. My informants state positively that they never sacrifice to any female spirit.

*Some Notes on Personal Adornment:* The women pierce the upper and lower lips and insert round disks of wood. These disks are called *no-muri* (see Fig. 114). *No-muri* means literally 'mouth stem of grass'; the hole first pierced is gradually widened until the aperture will allow an ordinary bobbin to be inserted. The effect is to give a very duck-billed appearance to the women.

Young 'bloods' tuck the penis under their string waist-belts (see Figs. 115 and 116). This custom is called *ler yore* (lit. tie up penis). Married men carry the penis in a cloth bag (*tontole*).

Men, as well as women, wear ear-rings, and the young men often

<sup>1</sup> The Lobi, I am informed, often do not wash 'for many markets' i.e. weeks. 'Sometimes a hundred days will pass before your wife will heat water and tell you to come and wash.'

<sup>2</sup> The Lobi men affect all the ornaments usually worn only by women.

<sup>3</sup> This cow is called *ku nafa*. A goat is also killed, called *kukur boo*. 'A man farms and first buys a goat with the proceeds. Next he buys a sheep, next a cow, so a goat is tied up with a hoe handle between its legs and then killed.' It is eaten by the *dogero*.

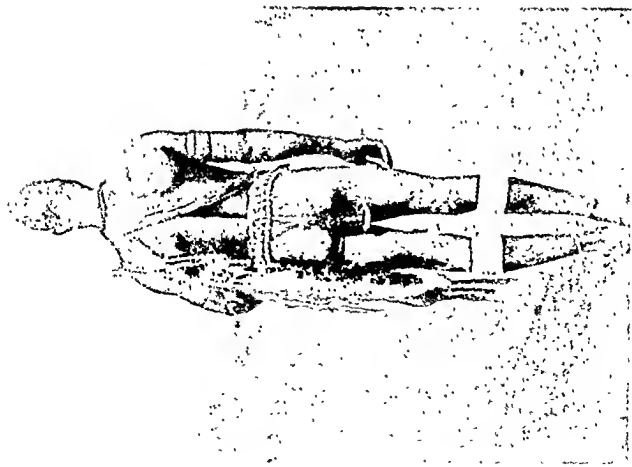


FIG. 120. A Lobi 'blood'

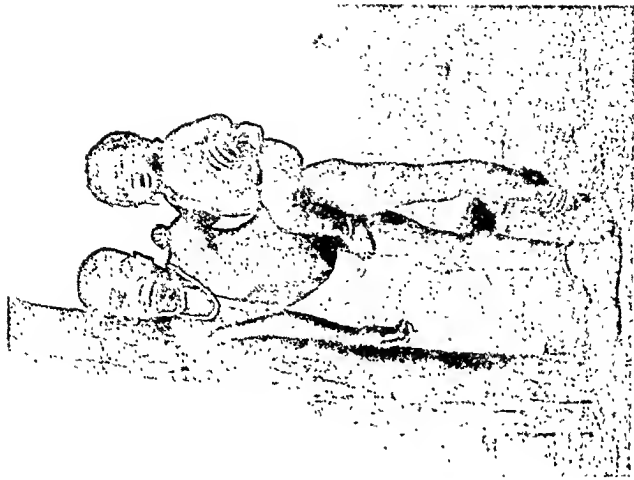


FIG. 121. Sisters



FIG. 122. A Lobi grain or ground-nut store

affect long hair. Men 'whose uncles are rich' wear an ivory plate called *nyawie* round their necks. The price of one of these ornaments is a cow. It descends to the heir 'unless it has been given to some "fetish" belonging to the owner, in which case it goes to the son'. Figs. 117-21 show some Lobi men, women, and children. Fig. 122 is a Lobi grain-store.

## THE WALA

*History, Tribal and Clan Organization. Rites de Passage*

WALA (s. Walo), as the name of a tribe, is in reality nothing more than an arbitrary title derived from the name of the capital town, Wa, and applied to the heterogeneous peoples who have nominally come under the jurisdiction of the *Na* (Chief) of that place. This so-called tribe numbered in 1921, 17,538 persons. Its composite elements are possibly comprised of Lobi, Dagaba, Isala, Awuna, and others, with an upper ruling class who hailed from Dagomba or Mampruse. Specimens of the language (Wale) will be found in the early chapters of these volumes. The indigenous population in Wa itself seems to have almost been swamped or absorbed by the foreign elements, many of whom are professed Mohammedans. There were reported to be 3,771 such in Wa district in 1921. This foreign element is very marked and shows itself in features, dress, and architecture (see Figs. 123 and 124). The majority of the Wala also circumcise. Females are 'cut' at the age of about seven days. In Wa itself there are also families who trace their origin to Hausaland and 'Mande'. Whether the last name is really Mandingo, as is commonly supposed by Europeans, is doubtful.

Mande is the name by which the French Ivory Coast is known to the natives of these parts. The tribe now known as Wala have long been under, at least the nominal, suzerainty of Chiefs who originally hailed from Mampurugu or Dagomba. The present *Na* (Chief) of Wa is the twenty-fourth of his line, tracing descent from Sorliya, the first Chief. The Chief's clan is *wuo* (iguana?). The following are the names of these foreign Chiefs in chronological order: Sorliya, Napkasa,<sup>1</sup> Gyonyose, Najare, Napelpuo, Nasagye, Nadandum, Nakunlugi, Nasobu, Nagyisono, Nakunzoku, Nabonteho, Fejolena, Nwankurina, Nabondiri, Nabanoe, Nayaslogero, Nabakyigime, Nabayiyene, Nama-fuo, Nasedu, Natanele, Naborduba, Napelepue.

The Chieftainship is, in theory, supposed to be held alternately by members of four family groups, each tracing descent from one or another of Sorliya's four 'sons', i.e. Nakpasa, Gyonyose, Najare, and Napelpuo, but in practice, the claimant who was strongest would

<sup>1</sup> The prefix *Na* means Chief.

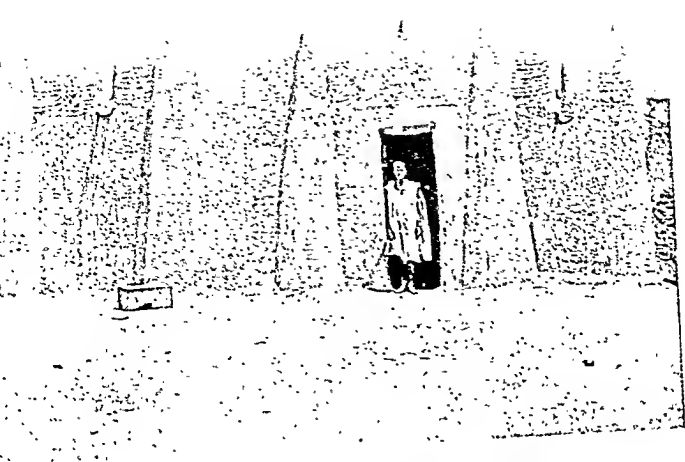


FIG. 123. A Wala house showing Mohammedan influence

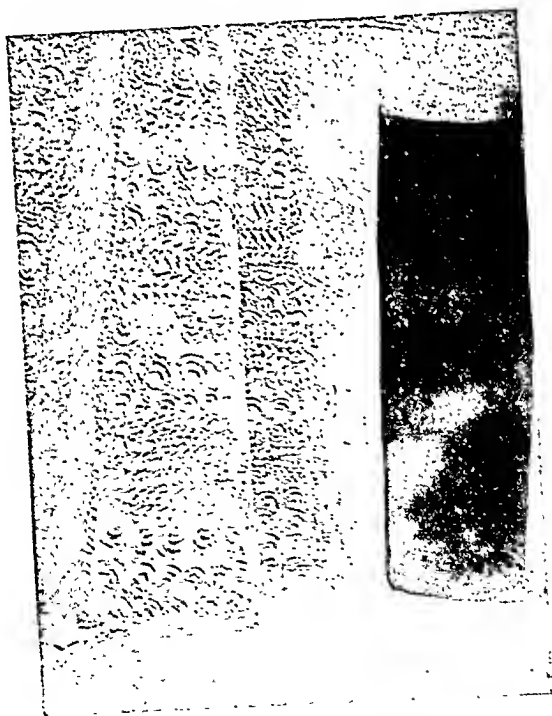


FIG. 124. Doorway to a house in Wa





FIG. 125. A Walo of Wukyau

seize the *Na*-ship. Lesser Chieftainships are filled by 'brothers' of the head Chief, and certain of these minor posts are looked upon as stepping-stones, leading, when a vacancy occurs, to the *Na*-ship, e.g. Busa, Sen, and Kpersi.

The Mohammedan element in Wa, to which reference has already been made, taboo *doo* (wild pig) and state that their ancestors were Wangara and that formerly they talked that language. 'Our ancestors came from Mande, thence to Garaba (Jaraba) where we found the Lobi.'

The descendants of the Hausa element in Wa, who call their group Zangberese, s. Zangbeo, and taboo *gongone* (grasshopper) state that their ancestors came from Kuka in Hausaland. All these foreigners now speak Wale. The Wala know the Hausa by the name of Zangbeo, which is also the name by which they are called among the Nankanse. The Isala, the Wala call Nogerse (deriv. *noye* to emigrate).

In the outlying villages, the life and customs of the indigenous common people are what has already been described in these pages. Again, we find here the *Ten'dana* or *Tengansoba* (owner of the groves) whom the Territorial Chiefs permit, half disdainfully, to carry on their immemorial rites in connexion with the land. 'Chiefs do not sacrifice to the land. Anything found on the land is still first taken to the *Ten'dana*, who then carries it to the Chief who will share it with him.'

*Inheritance*: A son takes his father's clan, and inheritance of property follows the normal lines, i.e. brother or half-brother—by different mothers. The age of the brothers is here the determining factor, an elder half-brother ousting a younger full-brother. When brothers and half-brothers are exhausted, the eldest 'son' succeeds. 'Son' may be the son of the deceased's younger brother if he is older than the deceased's own son, or older than the son of an elder brother.

The heir, among some of the Wala clans, may not marry the deceased's widow if the deceased was his full-brother, only a half-brother by a different mother may do so. Among some of the Wala a son sacrifices to a father's spirit through the deceased's grandson. No shrine is made;<sup>1</sup> a circle of ashes is drawn on the ground and the offering made upon this. A man sacrifices directly to his own mother and to his maternal grandfather, and, as stated above, to his paternal grandfather. A son inherits—to the exclusion of the heir—any 'medicine' in the use of which his parent has instructed him.

<sup>1</sup> Compare the Mampruse; see p. 463.

Twins must not be whipped. An earthen plate is made for each, and on these sacrifices are made to an ancestor, asking health for the twins.

*Marriage*: It is a father's duty to find a wife for his son. If he fails to do so, the young man will 'walk about' until he sees a girl whom he loves, to whom he will then present 20 cowries. This payment is known as *lijare* which means simply 'twenty'. If she is agreeable, she accepts it and hands it to her mother. The suitor continues to visit the girl's compound, and one day he abducts her, taking her to his village and hiding her in the house of a male friend. Here she remains for seven days, at the end of which time this friend conducts her to the man's father (or rather to the head of his compound). This man then takes 100 cowries and a white fowl and visits the bride's parents and asks their pardon. The peace-offering he takes is called *sandano* (compare Nankane *sandono*) and makes the marriage valid, giving the husband custody of any children born of the union.

There may also be a further payment called *kyebiri* (*kyerebo* in Dagari) of 17,000 cowries. This is the bride-price. In default of this latter payment, a man may not even bury his wife, should she die, and the parents-in-law have the right to take their daughter from the husband, but not the children, if the *sandano* has been paid.

Among the Wala there is a mutual agreement between many of the various clan settlements to waive the payment of the *kyebiri*, *sandano* only being asked and given. This arrangement exists between the following towns: Busa, Manwe, Buline, Logo, Boli, Tanenena, Ga, Pole, Kpono, Nakora, Kyansa, Mano, Duori, Gule, Nasa, Gyone, Tabiahe, Yaro, Wukyau, Duse, Gyayiri. If any of the men of these 'towns' takes a wife from Gyan, Noro, Sankana, Takpo, Dolomo, or Tabiahe, the full bride-price (*kyebiri*) is claimed. Any *kyebiri* received for a daughter is used by the head of the household to secure a wife for his 'sons', with the exception of 2,000 cowries which goes to the mother. The *sandano* is the perquisite of the girl's own father.

A maternal uncle may, if the man's own father is too poor, assist his nephew in securing a wife.

A son-in-law works on his father-in-law's farm, but may commute this service for a payment of cowries or of meat (game).

*Funeral Customs*: The following account was recorded at the village of Wukyau.<sup>1</sup> The corpse is not exposed outside the compound and the

<sup>1</sup> These customs bear every stamp of being influenced by the Mampruse element in the population.

burial is not delayed, the interment taking place the same day as death occurs. After bathing and oiling the body, it is dressed in white trousers, coat, and cap, all put on inside out, and from which any coloured threads and pockets have been removed. A grave for an adult is made inside the yard of the compound. The shape of the grave is square, and after digging down for some way, a ledge or niche is made on one side and on this the body is placed on a new mat; the open side of the recess is then closed in and the remainder of the pit filled in. Only one person is buried in each grave. Younger persons are buried outside the compound. A few months later, *ko-dam* (funeral beer) is prepared and the widows bathe, after which they may remarry. There does not appear to be any third funeral custom, 'Our widows do not put on white clay like the Lobi, but only a white band round the head, their cloth is turned inside out and they carry a grain stalk in their hands until after the *ko-dam* ceremony'.

The widows must remain chaste until the completion of the *ko-dam* custom 'or any man who later married them would die'. If a widow has not remained faithful to her late husband during this period, she must confess before the final bathing and refuse to take part in the ceremony of purification. No sick person may then look upon her, and she will be ridiculed by all and sundry for months.

## THE MAMPRUSE AND DAGOMBA

THE investigation of the tribes comprising, what I have termed, the Moshi group, is now complete, save for a brief reference to the area inhabited by the clans which are grouped under the above names. Almost everything that has now been written may be, in a greater or in a lesser degree, equally applied to these groups. This accounts for the small space devoted to them in the present chapter. The basic elements which go to make up these loose confederacies of Mampruse and Dagomba were undoubtedly of the same stock as the peoples whose customs and institutions have now been investigated. They also include offshoots from those other groups which still remain to be described, e.g. the Kasen'-Isal group.

While thus presenting no startling departure, either in the field of linguistics or in social institutions, from the tribes already investigated or to be investigated, the Mampruse and Dagomba have a very special interest and importance of their own.

The whole of my first volume, and a large part of the second, have been devoted to an account of those peoples whom, in my preface, I have termed the 'plain-folk'—i.e. the more or less autochthonous tribes whose habitat has been in or near their present homes for a considerable period of time as compared with the length of sojourn in the same locality of those whose history, position, and activities have hitherto almost wholly absorbed and distracted our attention and interests. I refer to the foreign invading bands who, for some hundreds of years have lived among these original inhabitants of the Northern Territories and built up the loose confederacies known to us as Mampruse, Dagomba, and Moshi. It is in this latter context that I shall later return to the Mampruse and Dagomba, in an endeavour to trace and to elucidate the nature of 'the machinery of government which these foreign rulers introduced, among the people who became nominally subject to them; this had been superimposed upon an earlier type of political organization that now lies like the lower writing of a palimpsest beneath this later impress'.<sup>1</sup>

The title Mampruse, s. Mampuriga, is derived from the name of what was formerly the capital town, Mampurugu, the site of which

<sup>1</sup> See Preface, p. XII.

now lies in the French Mandated area. The name came in time to be given to the peoples who came under the dominion of its Chiefs. The history and migrations of these Territorial Rulers, as far as it is known, will be given in a later chapter. With these Rulers we are not yet here concerned. The brief notes which follow refer to the subjects of this ruling caste. Specimens of the language, which is called Mampelle, have already been given in the early chapters of these volumes.

The Mampruse represent a people who for many hundreds of years have been under the dominion of Territorial Rulers, the *Nas* of Naleregu. As is always the case, we find, in these circumstances, far less upheaval and interference with the old régime as the result of the dominion of Rulers who were originally foreigners, than has followed from a decade of misrule by the interlopers whom I have described as 'Government-made-Chiefs'. These Territorial Rulers, who based their administrative machinery upon a judicious blending of the old and of the new, formerly—for in this respect things are rapidly changing for the worse—'feared and respected' the *Ten'dana*—the Priest-Kings—whom they encountered when they first settled as strangers in the land.

'Chiefs under Europeans have now more power and can shout at me' stated my informant, the old *Ten'dana* of Gambaga—who has since gone to join his spirit ancestors. This old man, Bawumia by name (see Fig. 126), stated he was seventh of his line. He must have lived to a ripe old age, as he stated he has seen seven *Nas* reign, i.e. Nyon, Pagale, Barega, Sigere, Zori, Wobega, and Wafo, the present *Na* (see Fig. 127). Gambaga was, he stated, originally in the possession of a red man called *Zob-zia* (red-head) and his wife. On his death, Na-Zom-Sa made his son *Ten'dana*. 'I am his descendant.' (We have here an echo of the curious and suggestive tradition, so often heard in this part of Africa, of rulers who were 'red', i.e. of white men, and if my informant is correct, it would appear that one of the *Nas* must have been married into the family from whom the *Ten'dama* were selected or otherwise usurped the post for his descendant.)

The following further information regarding the status and privileges of the Gambaga *Ten'dana* was given me by the late Bawumia.

- (a) He sacrificed to, and purified the land after pollution.
- (b) Lost property belonged to him.
- (c) When rain did not fall, people brought him fowls.

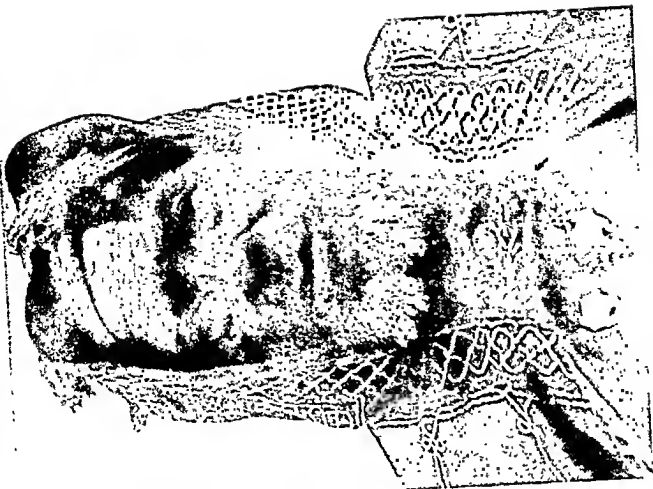


FIG. 127. The Na of Naleregu



FIG. 126. Bavumia, *Ten'dana* of Gambaga

(d) People who wished to make new farms went to him, and he sacrificed to the land, and they obtained good crops.

(e) When some one wished to make a new compound, he went to the *Ten'dana*, who then reported to the *Na* (Territorial Ruler).

(f) When a man died, his relations reported to the *Ten'dana* before burial, 'because the *Ten'dana* was the land'.

(g) The Chief used to deal with adultery and assault cases and fine the delinquents, but if the case was one from Gambaga, the *Ten'dana* would be present, but a *Ten'dana* never fined any one, 'he could only ask the land to punish people, but if he gave an order, he would be obeyed'.

(h) In olden days, before the arrival of Europeans, all cases in Gambaga were first reported to the *Ten'dana*, who then went with them to the Chief, where they were settled by the Chief, *Ten'dana*, and Elders.

He continued, 'Ah, in olden days, I was something. When a *Na* died, myself, the *Boko-dana*, and the *Sadugu-dana*<sup>1</sup> used to meet and appoint the new *Na* and drag him when appointed into the *Ba'-yure-do* (spirit room) where he had to remain for seven days'.

The *Ten'dana* stated that he still retained, among others, the following privileges. 'In the case of a lost cow, I will inform the *Na*, who will send his representative to be present at the sacrifice, but in the case of a sheep or goat, I need not tell the *Na* anything about it. All such things are sacrificed at the *Teybane* (sacred grove). A lost slave would be brought to me and I would send him to the *Na*. He would be worth about 100,000 cowries and I would receive about 20,000. With this sum I would buy fowls and a sheep and sacrifice at the *Teybane*. When any one finds a pot of money (cowries), I will be told, and I will then go and consult the soothsayers about it. This is necessary because when a man buries money he buries a *bugere* (the shrine of some spirit) with it, and you must know what spirit it is in order to sacrifice to it before taking the money. In the caves near here, are many pots of money, but no man will touch them, because they do not know what *bugere* is guarding it.

*Dawa dawa* trees on a man's farm belong to the farmer; those in the bush are the property of every one. Dead game found on the land belongs to me, save a foreleg, which goes to the finder. Bangles and beads and any other valuables belong to me, save when found by the Mohammedans who refuse to hand them over. Such things belong to

<sup>1</sup> Officials at the *Na*'s court.



me because I own the land; the *Na* (Territorial Ruler) owns us all, but I look after the land. I never heard of land being sold.'

Brother or half-brother succeeds to the *Ten'danaship* before a son. 'Son' means the eldest son of any brother or half-brother, not necessarily the son of the deceased.

*Marriage Customs:* 'No man is so poor but he can afford to have a wife', as the payment of cows, demanded by a girl's parents among so many of the tribes whose marriage customs have now been described, are not expected or demanded among the Mampruse.<sup>1</sup> All that is necessary to constitute a legal union of the sexes is a payment of 1,500 cowries, and 100 kola-nuts. This payment is known as *sandane* (compare the Nankanse *sandono*). The husband has also to work on his father-in-law's farm twice or thrice a year and keep his mother-in-law's hut in repair, and continue doing so until a child is born. Small presents of guinea-fowls and yams are also sent on the occasion of festivals.

In some cases where marriages are arranged between the parents of the boy and girl, the only payment demanded may be a few kola-nuts known as *poa-pusigo-guri*. When a bride is escorted to her future husband's compound for the first time, she is accompanied by her 'brothers' and 'sisters', who will bar the entrance to the bridegroom's hut until he pays them 400 cowries, known as *dakyi ligidi* (in-law's cowries).

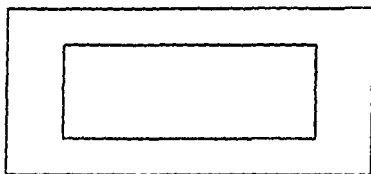
*Mampruse Funeral Customs:* 'When a man is about to die, we hold him up and give him water to drink.'<sup>2</sup> When he is dead, the body is bathed twice; the first bathing is called "the bad water" bathing (*ko beo*); the second bathing is known as "good water" (*ko-sono*), after which the corpse is dressed in a loin-cloth, white trousers, a white cloak, and a white hat. A white cloth is also spread on a new mat, and in this the corpse is swathed and the mat rolled round it. The eldest son supplies a sheep and a fowl which are killed in the yard of the compound (*dunder*) and grain-food is prepared which is called *sarfana* (in Dagomba, *sore sagam*, literally "food for the road").<sup>3</sup> The sextons and others attending the funeral partake of this food, and a portion of the grain-food and a leg of the fowl are also placed in a calabash which is set down in the room where the corpse had been laid prior to interment. As soon as a person dies, the family will report to the

<sup>1</sup> Nor do the Dagomba usually pay cows as bride-price; the payment of *sandane*, 4,000 cowries, being all that is required to constitute a legal marriage.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the Ashanti.

*Ten'dana*, who will send a representative to show them where the grave is to be made. The *Ten'dana* will also send some cowries and grain as a present for the *bayase* (sextons).

The digging of the grave is as follows. A calabash is laid on the ground. Three stalks of grass are taken (four for a female); one of the sextons taps the inverted calabash, inserts two of the straws under the rim and tilts it over; he tilts it back again into its former position; taps it again; again tilts it over and performs this operation three times for a male, four times for a woman. He then digs up a little of the soil and places it in the calabash, and empties it out on the east side of the grave and repeats this on the west side. The sextons then begin to dig the grave, assisted by sons and sons-in-law of the deceased and even by his friends. The corpse is measured and the length of the grave judged accordingly. The grave is an oblong.<sup>1</sup> 'The Gurense make round graves, not so the Mampruse.' The grave may be shaped thus.



The central portion, where the body lies, is deeper than the surrounding pit. The former is then roofed over with sticks and plaster and the grave filled in. The centre pit is called *dabore bia*. Graves are also dug with a niche, as already described for the Wala. Dagomba Chiefs are buried in the latter type of grave. (I cannot help thinking that we have here, as among the Wala, a type of grave copied from the foreign rulers.) The dead are buried without any delay. If the relatives are some distance away and have not been able to arrive in time, the grave may not be filled in, being covered with a mat until they have arrived.

The sextons wash on top of the grave, which is finally covered with branches of *nanobega* and *narega* trees to prevent hyenas from digging up the corpse. Should the grave be outside the compound in the *samane* (farm land near a compound), the corpse will be carried out through the door of the *zoyo* hut.<sup>2</sup> 'If a woman dies during

<sup>1</sup> Compare the Wala, see p. 456.

<sup>2</sup> Among the Dagomba, the wall between the *zoyo* and the adjoining hut is knocked down to permit the corpse to be carried out. Fig. 128 shows the *zoyo* hut of the

conception, we knock down the wall at the back of the compound, and bury her in the bush.' The *bayase* (sextons) bury the body. The people of Wulugu and Yagaba bury their dead dressed in a goat-skin. Before burial, the body is taken out of the mat; it is placed in the grave lying on the right side, if a male, and facing to the east, on the left side, and facing west if a woman, 'because men rise for work in the morning and women are preparing food in the evening'. (I cannot find any trace of the custom of 'sweeping' the totem from the corpse.)

The funeral custom, which includes the actual interment, is called *ko-mahere* (the wet or fresh funeral); compare the Nankanse who employ a similar term.

The Mampruse of Gambaga do not bury more than one person in a grave. The spot chosen for the grave<sup>1</sup> varies according to the status of the deceased, e.g. the *Ten'dana* of Gambaga informed me that when he died, he would like to be buried in his hut. A *Ti'dana* (head of a household) may be buried in the courtyard of his compound; a person of lesser importance is buried in the *samane* (compound farm). Three days after burial (four, for a female), a soothsayer is consulted as to the cause of death, which, in the case of a young person, is always supposed to have resulted from offending a spirit, if not caused by witchcraft. The remainder of the funeral custom—at least at Gambaga and its *environs*—seems considerably influenced by pseudo-Mohammedan practices. After the soothsayers have disclosed the cause of death, the children of the deceased bring fowls and sheep and present them to the local *Alfa-dema*, as they are called, i.e. the *Mallamai* who come and pray. This is done even when the deceased was a 'Pagan'. On this day, the widows, who, up to now, have carried a calabash and a knife, and had their ears plugged with cotton-wool, 'to prevent them hearing their late husband calling them', are taken behind the house and bathed with 'medicine' (*poko-ro*); their heads are shaved, and the shea butter leaves which they are wearing, along with their hair, are put

late *Ten'dana* of Gambaga; the partly closed exit is for spirits only and is called *za nore beo* (bad doorway). 'I have never yet opened this doorway since last rainy season when I built this *zogo* hut; before I do so, I must sacrifice a goat and fowl and call all the spirits, beginning with the "red headed" one. After having done so, I will leave the doorway open every Monday, Thursday, and Friday, closing it on other days with a mat.' My informant used the Arabic names for the days of the week.

<sup>1</sup> A separate word, *dune*, as opposed to the usual name, *dabore*, is used for the grave of a *Na* or *Ten'dana*.

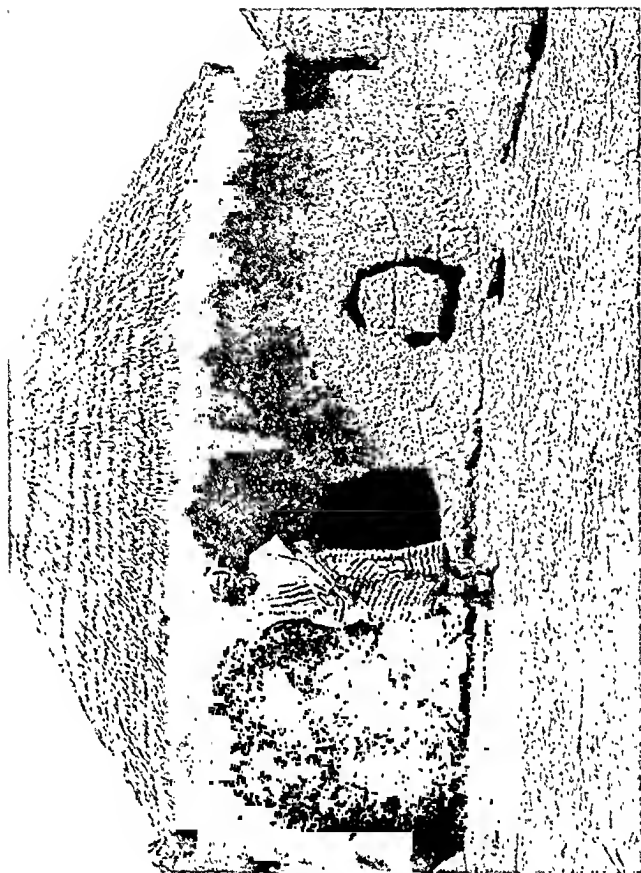


FIG. 128. The zwo hut, showing the entrance for the spirits

in the hole over which they stand while being bathed.<sup>1</sup> This part of the funeral custom is known as *sar'bere*; *sara* is a corruption, I think, of the Hausa *sadaka* (alms), and the expression means (the bad gifts) as opposed to a later custom known as *sar'soma* (good gifts).

Seven to ten days after the *sar'bere*, the 'sons' of the deceased again give fowls and a sheep to the *mallamai* and also cowries, presenting the last-named gifts with the words, '*De Nawuni zugu*' (Receive on God's head, i.e. on account of God). After a feast, the widows, who have remained chaste, take turns in dressing up in their late husband's trousers and coat and hat, and, taking his bow and quiver in their hand, walk round their late husband's compound to the accompaniment of the shrill *kyeleya* cry of the women.<sup>2</sup> This part of the funeral custom is known as *sar'soma* (good gifts). The widows are now free to marry. A son is not permitted to marry any widow of his late father with whom the latter has ever had sexual intercourse. The same rule applies to a full-brother; a half-brother may, however, do so. After the *sar'soma* ceremony, the widows go all round the town carrying a calabash and collecting cowries. If the deceased were a person of importance, a year after the death, his relations prepare food and again present the Mohammedans in the town with sheep and fowls. This custom is known as *yum'palle* (full year).

The Mohammedan influence in and near Gambaga seems to have prevented the preparation and consumption of beer, which is such an indispensable adjunct at most funeral customs.

As among all these tribes, persons dying of small-pox are buried in the 'bush'. Children, stillborn and miscarriages, are put in a pot and buried on the kitchen midden.

*Spirits of the Dead*: When a Mampuriga of Gambaga wishes to sacrifice to his father, he does so on his grave. 'We Mampruse', stated my informant, 'make no *ba'yule* (shrine) for our father's spirit, we sacrifice upon his grave, or if he has died elsewhere, on the path leading to that town. My own father is buried where the European police lines now stand, so I now sacrifice to him there' (pointing to a few feathers on the ground just outside his compound). 'Whenever I sit and pour out water and call the name of my father, he will hear me and accept the offering. Or, again, I may sit before my own *Wuni* (*Tini* in

<sup>1</sup> After which they dress in white, save for black strings (*poko mia*) round their necks.

<sup>2</sup> Among the Dagomba, the widows are made to pass through the gap in the compound wall, through which their late husband's corpse had been carried.

Nankane) and call my father's name. I can do so because my father's *Wuni* is joined with my own.' (The *Wuni* was a small mound raised only a few inches above the ground, inside the compound wall.) 'Women may have their own *Wuni*' added my informant, and he rose up and showed me such a shrine—a small mound of clay inside a dish, with part of the skull of a goat and a piece of rag lying beside it.

All the above notes were collected at Gambaga a few miles from Naleregu, the residence of the Paramount Chief of the Mampruse. I feel certain that indigenous customs have here been considerably influenced by centuries of contact with the foreign rulers and their following, whose distinctive *régime* will be subjected to investigation in later chapters. My survey of the main elements<sup>1</sup> which comprise the Moshi group is now complete, and I pass on in the chapters which follow to an investigation of those tribes which fall under my second classification, i.e. the Kasen'-Isal group, which includes Isala, Awuna or Fëra, Kasena, Tampolense, and Vagala.

<sup>1</sup> The Bimoba and Konkomba possibly also come under this heading.

## THE ISALA

*Tribal and Clan Histories*

THE tribes whose languages have been classified under the heading of the Kasen'-Isal group comprise the following: the Isala—with the closely allied Tampolense and Vagala—the Awuna or Fëra, and the Kasena. These five tribes will now be investigated in the above order.

The Isala, who were returned in the 1921 Census as numbering 21,698 persons, occupy the area shown on the map, but as we have already seen, many of those who were originally of this stock and formerly spoke this language have become merged, politically or otherwise, in neighbouring tribes,<sup>1</sup> the only traces of their former origin, in some cases, being the presence of the original clan totems and sometimes the retention of certain distinctive customs which mark them out as differing from the tribes in which they have become absorbed. The former clue to their original stock, i.e. the possession of clan totems found among a neighbouring or even distant tribe, is, however, often obscured, because the original totem name has been changed into that by which the animal (&c.) is known in the language of the new tribe among whom the emigrants had settled. Thus, unless the meanings of the words in the various vernaculars are known and compared, there may not be any apparent connexion between the terms employed, although in reality the totems which the different names designate may be identical.

The possession of a common tribal name in the Northern Territories never postulates, with any degree of certainty, a common linguistic or racial origin for all the units which comprise that tribe. The possession of common avoidances (totems) among the elements comprising two or more disparate tribes may, however, do so.<sup>2</sup>

The Isala are known locally by various names—Isala, Sisala, Pasala, Debe, Tamboboba, Galebagla. Babatu, the Zabarma slave-raider, and his followers, called the Isala 'Gurense'. The name Isala, which is that by which the tribe is generally known, was probably a sobriquet

<sup>1</sup> The converse, too, holds; the Isala tribe contains many groups, now speaking that language and calling themselves Isala, who originally belonged to other tribes and spoke other languages. This is well exemplified in the clan histories.

<sup>2</sup> There are exceptions to this, even in the same tribe, as will be seen presently.

originally bestowed upon them by their neighbours but later adopted and accepted by themselves. The word Isala (s. Isal; the language is Isalen) is popularly supposed to have originated from the sound of the phrase, *N se ba*?<sup>1</sup> with which members of this tribe preface many of their sentences. Vocabularies and notes on Isalen grammar and syntax have been given in the early chapters of the previous volume.

*History of Certain Isala Clans:* There are two ways of inquiring of an Isal to what clan he belongs; one may ask, 'What do you swear by?' (*Ben nwebe*?) or, 'What do you avoid?' (*Ben vea*). The nouns formed from these verbs appear to be used for what we would call the clan totem, i.e. *nwean* and *viero* or *vero*—the thing you swear by, the thing you avoid. The latter word is the one most commonly used, and when coupled with the name of the totem, gives us the clan name; thus *Ganga-vera* (s. *Gangavero*) those of the Crow clan, lit. crow-avoiding persons; *Nyevera*, those who avoid crocodile; *Samvera*, those who avoid porcupine, &c. &c.

A clansman may not marry a clanswoman; the son acquires the clan of his father. The following is a list of Isala clans with the names of the settlements (towns) in which they are grouped. Among the Isala, the association of clan with town is still so well-marked that it is generally possible for a local Native immediately to allocate a particular clan<sup>2</sup> to a particular town or towns.

<sup>1</sup> *N se ba* means 'I say, do I not?' (compare Hausa, *na cbe ba?* Mole, *mam ye'te a*). There are four dialectal variations of this idiom which the Isala themselves recognize and refer to as marking out four dialects of their language. These four forms are: (a) *N se ba*; (b) *me se ya*; (c) *me sable ga*; (d) *n ba borea*.

*Dialect (a)* is spoken in the following 'towns' or clan settlements, i.e. Poloma, Sorobele, Soobebe, Boti, Kopoloma, Gorma, Gyawia, Gyiton, Kosalo, Lipillime, Gwallo, Nyimati, Bellu, Gbolo, Kwola, Jifishi, Timie, Dubie, Deseme, Kande, Lenwura, Sakai.

*Dialect (b)* is spoken in Tumu, Bojan, Kyinkyen, Tafase, Nankyala, Nabogyan, Demagyan, Dolbezan, Zambulugu, Sumburu, Babugyan. Those who speak this dialect call all those who talk the former dialect 'Debe', while the Debe call the *me se ya* speaking group, 'Sisala'.

*Dialect (c):* This group comprises the 'towns' of Gwose, Asantegyan, Gwenerisi, Nyamanea, and Lure. Those who speak this dialect of Isalen are called by the others 'Tamboboba'.

*Dialect (d)* is spoken by the people of Walembele, Taso, Bubele, Kolfuo, Nwandono, Bekyemboi, Kurbele. Those who speak this dialect are known among the Isala as 'Galebaga'.

The Awuna and Kasena know the Isala by the name of Sisai, pl. Sisala. The people of Funsu, Halonbele, Kulum, and Somisi are often referred to as 'Pasala'.

<sup>2</sup> Or sometimes clans.



<i>Clan Totem (name in Isalen).</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>Name of Clan Settlement.</i>
1. <i>Gangan.</i>	Crow.	Tumu, Yigantu.
2. <i>Gama.</i>	Crown-bird.	Gwolo, Sorobebe, Kopoloma, Poloma, Nyimati, Kwola, Kande, Gorma, Soobebe.
3. <i>Hene.</i>	A small red pot.	Kon, Sakai, Nankpovie, Lelekese, Dene, Bakoala, Badisebai, Kpau, Gyigyen, Santie, Kosale.
4. <i>Pwei.</i>	Leopard.	Kyinkyan (members of the leopard clan are also to be found in Boti, Bujene, <sup>1</sup> Jifishi, and Tapengyan. (There also appears to be a second leopard clan with a distinct origin; see clan histories.)
5. <i>Sam.</i>	Porcupine.	Kulfo, Walembele, Bugobebe, Taso, Lurwie, Gyawia, Nyanto (Fr.), Nwan-kuru, Wasai (Lawra district).
6. <i>Gangachobo.</i> <sup>2</sup>	A kind of wood used for ceilings of huts.	Kpanie, Dolbezan, Nwanchan.
7. <i>Piesu.</i>	Sheep.	Kusalo, Gyigyen, Santie, Sogoboi, Tuneaboi, Belele, Katoa. (The last three are in the Wa district.)
8. <i>We'ten.</i>	Skin of <i>weme</i> , a small antelope.	Gyana.
9. <i>Heli or Hel.</i>	Jerboa?	Bulu, Gyiton, Nyamati.
10. <i>Non-bu ar nwam.</i>	Grindstone hole and monkey.	Boti, Watulu (French Territory), Nabulo.
11. <i>Kantile.</i> <sup>3</sup>	A small mouse.	Members of this clan are found in Nyamati, Bulu, Kunkogo, a few in Gwalo, Chagala (Dagaba, under Lawra), Koala.
12. <i>Ban or Bala.</i>	Iguana.	Sangaka (French), Kyinkyan, Jitishi, Boti.
13. <i>Nantebe.</i>	Slipper.	Sakalo, Bendai, Jifishi, Soobebe, Boti, Lenwerea.
14. <i>Cbangbei.</i>	Frog.	Challo.
15. <i>Nyeva.</i> <sup>4</sup>	Crocodile.	Lipilime, Gyawia, Nyimati, Takura (Fr.), Gwolo, Kasana.
16. <i>Kwai.</i>	Dung beetle.	Nwanduan.
17. <i>Gunguro.</i>	Hyena.	Dolbezan.
18. <i>Dol.</i>	Python.	Natin.

<sup>1</sup> In the Lawra district.<sup>2</sup> Also heard, *gangachomo*, *gingachoko*.<sup>3</sup> This word is also heard, *kantulo*, *kantele*, *katile*, *katila*.<sup>4</sup> There are at least two other groups also with a crocodile as totem which may possibly have had separate origins from the above and from each other. See clan histories.

Clan Totem (name in Isalen).	English.	Name of Clan Settlement,
19. <i>Pic-ten</i> .	Goatskin (a sub-totem of the <i>Hene</i> clan; see history of).	Katoa, Gyigen, Santie, Kosale.

The story of the wanderings of these clans and the reasons given for the particular avoidances (where known) are as follows. The information in each case was taken down verbatim from the Elders of the various clans. The perusal of these traditions shows very clearly how truly cosmopolitan a so-called tribal unit may be.

*The Gangavera* (Crow clan) of Tumu, the town of the Head-chief of the Isala.<sup>1</sup> 'We have been told that our ancestors came from Kaha.<sup>2</sup> We left Kaha because of a quarrel arising out of the sacrifice of a dog. Our ancestor, Potabagbe, only set aside the head of the sacrifice for a younger brother who was absent and this gave rise to a dispute which caused the clan to split up. Thus were founded the Tampolense (see Tampolense history). From Kaha we came to Nyagene, Yagaba, and Nangruma, hence to Igantu (Yigantu) near Dolbezan, thence to Gyikwie and finally to Tumu. Potabagbe (alias Basambal) who was a Crow clansman, died before reaching here (Tumu). He was succeeded by Kusun. When our ancestors first came here, they met the Kulumwala (alias the *Hen'vera*, see 3 *supra*), and drove them away, but later, all the *Hen'vera* clan—Sakai, Korɔ, Nankpovie, Lelekese, Badisebai, and Bakoala attacked the Crow clan and drove them from Gyikwie—which was then called Kulunwan—the ruins of which can be seen to-day. Kusan was in turn succeeded by Kuri, Kanton I, and Namporo. In Namporo's time, Babatu, the slave-raider, came. The Gangavera paid him tribute and entered his service. Namporo was succeeded by Bayebe, Benada (father of one of my informants, Dimoa, see Fig. 129), Mumaha Wagere (or Wogere). In Wagere's time, the Europeans came. He was *Tinteintina* (*Ten'dana* in Nankane) and when the white men asked who was Chief, he came forward.<sup>3</sup> Wagere was succeeded by Gbambela, Nankane, Dimoa, and Kanton II., the present secular Chief.' As far as I could discover, the office of *Tinteintina* and secular Ruler became separated after the death of Nankane. Dimoa, who now holds the office of *Tinteintina* (owner of the land),

<sup>1</sup> See Modern Constitution of Isala, Chapter LII.

<sup>2</sup> This place, so far as I could discover, is to the eastward, in the neighbourhood of Gambaga. The Crow clan and Tampolense were apparently originally of one stock.

<sup>3</sup> Thus at Tumu the Priest-King became also (at first) the Territorial Ruler.

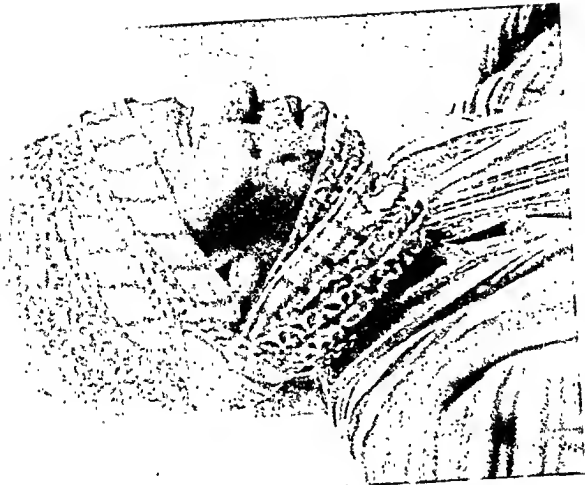


FIG. 130. Kanton II, Chief of the Isala



FIG. 129. Dimoa, *Tintintina* of the Crow clan

was apparently set aside to make room for Kanton II, who was formerly a court interpreter (see Fig. 130). Dimoa reverted to his original position as Priest-King. Kanton II appears, however, to be from the old ruling caste. He claims to be a 'younger brother' of Dimoa, but this only, I think, in the classificatory sense. From the above tradition, it would appear that the Isala of the Crow clan have only occupied their present habitat during a period equivalent to the lifetime of some twelve heads of the clan. As a number of these men would almost certainly be brothers, the time of their first arrival cannot therefore have been at all remote. There are, as we have seen, only two Crow clan settlements, i.e. Tumu and Yigantu.<sup>1</sup> The inhabitants of these two towns do not intermarry, but a curious custom exists (also to be noted elsewhere) whereby a Yigantu woman who may come to Tumu is liable to be caught and given in marriage to a man (other than a Crow man), and the *jaron*<sup>2</sup> (bride-price) be claimed by the Chief of Tumu 'because all Yigantu women are his daughters'. My informants continued: 'If we see a large number of crows collected, we know that an important clansman will die. Crows are not killed, and if we saw one dead, we would bury it in our cap or in a small piece of cloth and sacrifice a fowl for it. We do not turn into crows when we die; we respect them because a crow once saved the life of our ancestor, by warning him of danger when he was asleep.'

'With the exception of a wife for whom *jarun* (or *jaron*) has been paid, only clansmen may be buried in the same grave. If the bride-price has not been paid, a wife's family may take her body away for burial.'

*The Gamvera (Crown-bird Clan):* The old, once walled, town of Gwolo (or Gwoli or Gbolo, as the name is variously pronounced) was the original settlement of this clan. From there, its clansmen spread and founded the other towns given in the list of clans.<sup>3</sup> The *Gamvera*, according to the tradition about to be narrated, originally came from near Bole. They state that their ancestors were 'Kagwenye' i.e. Gonja, and that formerly they spoke that language. I think it just possible, that in making this statement, my informants may have meant to imply that they were formerly Vagala<sup>4</sup> (who in turn are possibly the

<sup>1</sup> A few members of this clan are also found scattered in other settlements.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 501.

<sup>3</sup> Gwolo also contains some clansmen of the *Katile* and *Nyera* clans.

<sup>4</sup> Against this theory, however, may be mentioned the fact that many of the *Gamvera* at Gwolo appear to circumcise; this, however, may have resulted from

same as the Tapolense), who occupy much of the area now loosely designated Gonja. Not knowing at the time of the existence of the Vagala, I accepted their statement—that they were formerly Gonja—without further question, so must leave my surmise to be verified or not by others. This can easily be done by any one on the spot.

The following is the history of this clan's migration as told me by the Elders of Gwolo. 'The *Gamvera* (or *Gamavera*) came from Bole. We were formerly Kagwenye and spoke the language. Our ancestors, Sunkuruga and his younger brother, Yaligea, were hunters. They quarrelled over the sacrifice of a dog upon some hunting "medicine", and Sunkuruga left Bole in consequence; Yaligea remained behind, and his descendants are in Bole to-day. Sunkuruga wandered through the bush until he reached Kokorogamo (lit. beneath the bush) at Gwolo. Here he settled to hunt and finally married a woman called Kadua<sup>1</sup> of Lo (Leo, Fr.) of the *Kpei* and *Garo* clan (Leopard and Cloth<sup>2</sup> clan). This woman bore him sons called Naba and Kune and a daughter called Kalivie (name of a hunting medicine). Naba married a woman of Nyanto called Haboko,<sup>3</sup> an Awuna of the Hare clan. Kune married a woman of Gyiton—of the Jerboa clan—called Dimoituo (lit. Where can you run away to?). She was an Isal woman. An Isal man called Wole, married Kalivie. He was of the Crocodile clan and came from Kasana. He did not take her away, but lived with her in her father's house until she became with child, when he built a hut at the place called Woldwua (lit. Wole's town; *dwua* = the Isalengyan). Kune had four sons, Wasabela, Fiako, Basenye, and Demanue. Naba had not any descendants. The *Gamvera* are descended from the four sons of Kue.'

The following is the list of *Totina* (or *Taotina*)<sup>4</sup> Priest-Kings who have held this office at Gwolo. Sunkurugu, Naba, Kune, Wasabla, Fiako, Dema (son of Wasabla), Duwie (son of Wasabla), Antetow (son of Wasabla), Gbal or Dampal (son of Basenye), Wavei (son of Wasabla), Siperu (son of Wasabla), Tangia (son of Duwie), Yagbon (a grandson of Antetow), Zanteo (a son of Bayuko who was son of Tampal, a new

contact with the Mohammedan slave-raiders. Their women have the clitoris cut when still infants. The Gwolo people call the people of Tumu 'Kupile', and are called by them 'Debe'.

<sup>1</sup> *Kadua* in Awuna means woman (*kan*), tornado (*dua*); the name shows that she belonged to the Awuna or Fëra tribe. The Isala state that in the past they did not intermarry with the Lobi and Dagaba, because 'they were too far away'.

<sup>2</sup> Taboo to bury in a cloth.

<sup>3</sup> Means simply 'female child'; *baboko* 'male child'.

<sup>4</sup> *Tinteintina* in other dialects of Isalen.

line; informants state that the old line became extinct); Baduon (son of Zanteo), Basechesu (son of Zanteo), Tui (grandson of Bayuko), Nala (son of Zantea, the present *Totina* (*Ten'dana*)).<sup>1</sup>

Thus we find that twenty Priest-Kings have held office since this clan came from Bole.

'All these *Totina* were also *Venetina*, i.e. in charge of the *Vene* (ancestral gods, groves?), but they did not actually perform the sacrifices, delegating this work to the *Venekparo*. Besides the *Totina*, there are *Bagatina* and *Footina*. The *Bagatina* look after the bush, the *Footina* the rivers, the latter also look after the crocodiles; all are under the *Totina* and perform these tasks for him, as he cannot walk about everywhere himself.'

'A *Totina* is succeeded by his brother; if all the brothers are dead, the eldest 'son' of the deceased or of his brothers—according to the age of the son, not the seniority of his father—succeeds.'

'Babatu, the slave-raider, came in the time of Yagbon; Europeans arrived in the time of Baduon. Tangia built the walls round Gwolo, not Tangia the *Totina*, but a second son of Yagbon of the same name. He was a *koro*, a rich man.<sup>1</sup> When the Zabarma, Babatu, came, Tangia was sent by his father with ten men to meet him. They had an interview at Prata (now in French territory) and Babatu first came to Gwolo as a friend and joined with the *Gamvera* to fight the people of Pana who had been enemies of Gwolo. While Babatu and his army were at Kasana (not far from Tumu), the *Gamvera* began to build their wall.<sup>2</sup> Tangia had a friend called Musa who lived at Sefi (in French Territory), which was a walled town. It was from Musa that Tangia got the idea of the walls. The Gwolos were assisted in the work by the *Nonbu* clan from Watulu (Fr.), the *Kantile* clan from Koala, the *Nyeva* clan from Nyimati, Lipilime, and Takure (in French Territory), and the *Piesu* clan from Kusalo.' The work is said to have been completed in four months. Babatu, however, never attacked Gwolo. Tangia became the first Chief in the modern accepted sense.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 486 where the significance of this word will be explained.

<sup>2</sup> The walls of Gwolo, the ruins of which may still be seen, consisted of an inner circular wall surrounding the town—loop-holed with triangular-shaped loop-holes—with four gateways, and an outer wall which enclosed farms and the water-supply within its perimeter. The walls were about ten feet or more in height; the removal of the earth used to build them also served to form a deep ditch. The distance between the inner and outer walls is quite three hundred yards. The ruins, even as standing to-day, show what a remarkably combined effort their construction must have been. Very similar walls are to be found at Naleregu in NE. Mampruse.

He was succeeded by his younger brother, Musa, later by his son Hama, who was succeeded by his brother Bambiau. Bambiau was succeeded by Sumane, son of Musa, who was in turn succeeded by Kazia, son of Hilla (a younger 'brother' of Tangia) who is the present Territorial Ruler.

We have here an interesting example of the rise of an individual to the position of Chief, by his own individual leadership and ability. From the above, it will be seen that this branch of the Isala were originally Gonja or Vagala.

*The Hen'vera (the Small Red-pot Clan).* *Hene* is a small pot, which in the firing has not been blackened. Members of this clan may not raise such a pot to the lips, but are permitted to eat out of it with the fingers. 'An ancestor once did the former while feeding his child, which died in consequence; hence the taboo.<sup>1</sup> There is a deliberate and ceremonial violation of this taboo after death. Shea butter is put in a *hene* pot and melted and the corpse is rubbed with the fat. Before burial, the pot is raised to the mouth of the corpse three times (four if a woman) to the accompaniment of the following words: 'What you avoided during life, to-day you do it'.<sup>2</sup> This is done to remove the 'avoidance' which the dead must not take to the spirit world. 'If this were not done, other clansmen would die.' This ceremony is performed by some old woman of the clan who has returned to live in her native town. In the case of a *Hene* woman who has married and died in her husband's town, the ceremony must be performed by a clanswoman of the deceased who is resident in that town and not by some one who is living in the wife's original settlement. Were the latter to do so, it would be considered an interference on the part of her people which would be resented by the husband of the dead woman. He, having paid the bride-price, considers he owns his wife even in death.

The traditional history of the wanderings of this clan, before it reached its present home, is instructive, as showing that such accounts, even when they appear somewhat mythical or fanciful, may be based nevertheless on some foundation of fact. The Elders of the *Hen'vera* clan at Kog state that their ancestors originally came from near Gambaga and that they were, long ago, Mohammedans and circumcised. 'Our ancestor was the eldest son of a powerful Chief. He had a roan on which he used to ride to prayer. One day it took fright at the

<sup>1</sup> There are variations of this story current.

<sup>2</sup> With variation, 'We cover your mouth with it'.

sound of guns firing and ran away with its rider on its back. He had his ankles shackled beneath the belly of the roan. His father and people set out to follow him, past Savalugu, past Daboya, over hills until they finally reached Gwantalla. The Chief who followed his son was accompanied by a wife who was *enceinte* and when his party reached Gwantalla, he left her there and passed on to Challos. Here one of his following got a sore foot and he remained behind. The rest passed on until they reached Brukon, but still they did not overtake the roan and its rider. The Chief said he would remain at Brukon, but he sent his younger brother forward to continue the quest. He and his party went on until they came upon the roan and its rider lying dead on the spot where the "town" of Kon (Roan) now stands and here they settled. The Chief later followed from Brukon. When our ancestors came here, they found Isala in Kovie. We no longer circumcise or practise Mohammedanism.'

At Challos, which is mentioned in the above tradition, where I visited later, I was told the following:

'Our ancestors came from Naleregu (near Gambaga). An ancestor whose name we do not know, had a tame roan (*Kau* in the dialect of Challos) which was hobbled with a pair of iron fetters. Our ancestor was not a Mohammedan although many of his following were.<sup>1</sup> At some feast, our ancestor had mounted his roan, when it ran away with him and did not stop until it fell dead at Kau (Kon), where the fetters are still said to be preserved.<sup>2</sup> The clansmen of our ancestor who followed in search of him founded the towns of Kon, Ena (now deserted), Dane, Lelekese, Nankpovie, Sakai, Kpan (also known as Dolbezan), Halembalea, Katoa, Gyigen, Santie, Kosale, Bakoala, Badisegya (or *baɪ*).<sup>3</sup> The inhabitants of these towns were once known as Kulumwala; they were formerly powerful; they do not intermarry. 'When our ancestors first came here, they met people at Challos called Gungoro whose language we later adopted. We no longer circumcise. We have heard that at Naleregu, on the death of a Chief, his successor goes to the ruined town of our ancestors and makes pretence of setting out to follow the roan, but is dissuaded by his people from doing so. When our ancestors were seeking for their lost clansman on his roan, they became in rags and had no clothes left, so when any one

<sup>1</sup> In Challos, Santie, Gyigen, Sakalo, Dolbezan, Halembalea, Katoa, and Kosale, *Mallamai* are to be found; the Isala in fact sometimes refer to the inhabitants of these towns as Yalea (Mohammedan scribes).

<sup>2</sup> I visited Kon later and was shown the fetters, see Fig. 131.



died, were compelled to bury them in goatskins; thus this became the taboo of some.<sup>1</sup>

About a year after I had recorded the above clan histories, I visited Gambaga and Naleregu, where the following interesting confirmation of the preceding traditions was obtained. The Chief of a town called Nagboo, who came to see me, stated that: 'Very long ago, a son of a Na of Nagboo gave orders for a roan to be caught alive and tamed. Upon this he used to ride, until one day he rode away upon it shackled. Our ancestors followed him until some, becoming afraid at going so far, returned. Ever since then we have been forbidden to eat roan. At the present day, all Chiefs of Nagboo have a title *Nagboo tare bane zays wiri, baare kore* ("Nagboo has shackles, refuses horses, rides roans"). There is an old town of Nagboo, where, when a new Chief is installed, we sacrifice a sheep and fowl and then all make pretence to follow our lost kinsmen.'<sup>1</sup>

*The Pweivera (Leopard Clan):* There appear to be two separate clans with this name, with distinct origins, but each—possibly by a chance coincidence—having a leopard as a totem (compare the *Nyeva*, Crocodile clans). The first of these Leopard clans is that found at Kyinkyan (see No. 4 in list already given). 'Our ancestors came from Dalo, in French Territory, and were originally Wangara. From Dalo we went to Kasuku (Fr.), thence to Sisili (Fr.) near Leo, from there to Sangaka (Fr.) and to Fian (Fr., near Don), and thence to Kyinkyan. We left some of our clansmen at all these places. Originally Wangara, we next became Awuna, and finally Isala, but at funeral customs we still sing songs in Awuna.' None of the villages given as inhabited by this branch of Leopard clansmen intermarry, i.e. Boti, Jifishi, &c., 'but', stated the Kyinkyan Chief, 'if I see a woman from Boti, for example, I could give her in marriage to some one, but I would not claim the *hal-gyaren* (bride-price)'.

The second Leopard clan, whose members are to be found at Sorbele, Lenwera, Gorema, Takure (Fr.) state:

'Our ancestors came from Brukon (Fr. near Yolo?). Two brothers had a quarrel which caused us to leave Brukon. We came to a mountain across which we could not find the way until a leopard showed it to us. A crown-bird had also flown across the mountain, but after

<sup>1</sup> These people professed never to have heard what had become of those who went on, and were astonished when I told them about the *Hen'vera*, who were now Isala, and of the existence of the shackles at Konj. They stated that they would get in touch with them immediately.

an argument, we decided to make a leopard our avoidance. We came to Sorbele,<sup>1</sup> and thence founded other villages. We found people of the *Gangachoho* clan, but later they all died of small-pox. We Sorbele Leopard clansmen also have another avoidance. It is to say the words "*Kolo mon*" (bad food) in any clansman's presence. This avoidance arose because an ancestor once gave his child some water in which meat had been cooked, and he afterwards died. Some clansmen also have another avoidance, a monkey. They would kill a monkey, but not eat it.' The possible origin of these subsidiary taboos will be examined later.

*Samvera (Porcupine Clan)*: The *Samvera* state that their ancestors came from Nwankuru.<sup>2</sup> Besides the clan settlements named in the table given above, some of the Porcupine clan are also to be found in Sorbele and Gyawia.

'Our ancestor was a blacksmith, who worked with his sons. Some people came to kill him and he ran away until he became tired and lay down at the foot of a *Pilisol* tree and went to sleep. A porcupine was up the tree eating the fruit. The people who had come to kill the smith had followed him and would have found him asleep had the porcupine not fallen upon him and awakened him in time. If we see a porcupine quill on the path, we know that some one will die.'

*The Gangachoho Clan*: The name is also heard *Gangachomo*, *Gingachoho*. The word is derived from the name of the sticks used in the making of flat roofs; one of these is stated to have pierced an ancestor's foot causing his death. Before dying, he swore that his descendants must never use this kind of wood again. This clan state that their ancestors came from near Bontuku (now in the French Ivory Coast). That locality they left owing to a quarrel about a woman. From Bontuku they state they first went to Fensi (Fungsi on our maps), thence to Nwanchan (see above, history of Leopard clan) spreading thence to Dolbezan, Kovie, &c. Members of this clan are also to be found in Poloma, Gyawia, and Gyiton. 'This is owing to the custom of our sons sometimes leaving their fathers' clan settlement and going to live in the towns of their maternal uncles.'

'Besides the primary avoidance, we have also as *toma*<sup>3</sup> (s. 177) *dol*

<sup>1</sup> The Territorial Ruler in Sorbele is a *Gama*.

<sup>2</sup> Nwankuri (or Nwankuru) is a Dagaba settlement of the *Sieni* clan. *Sieni* is a porcupine in the Dagari language. This appears to substantiate the above tradition, which has further confirmation in the fact that the Isala and Dagaba Porcupine clans do not intermarry even to this day.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 494.

(python), *golonswol* (tortoise), and *boso* (a poisonous snake). On the death of a Gangachoho clansman, a string is taken out of the mat on which the corpse was laid and this is bound round the head of the body.<sup>1</sup>

*Piesuvera* (Sheep Clan): Those who have this totem are found to-day in Santie, Gyigyen, and Kusalo. The Chief of Sakai (*Hene* clan), states that the *Piesuvera* followed the *Hen'vera* from near Naleregu and formed the Mohammedan element among them. The Chief of Santie is to-day a professed Mohammedan, but the majority of the clan have reverted to the local religious beliefs. When a member of this clan dies, the body is first dressed in white robes and set up outside, but before burial, these clothes are removed and a sheepskin substituted in which the body is buried. The above was told me by the Chief of the *Hen'vera*, and is borne out by the following as narrated by the Elders of the *Piesu* clan.

'Our clansmen now occupy the following towns. Kusalo, Gyigyen, Santie, Sogoboi, Teneaboi, Belele, and Katoa.<sup>1</sup> None of the people of these towns intermarry. Long ago, we, the *Hen'vera*, and the *Changbeivera* (Frog clan) all lived near each other somewhere to the east, near Gambaga. The *Hen'vera* were the most powerful group; we, the (Sheep clan) were Mussulmans. The *Hen'vera* caught a roan and tamed it, but on a certain Friday it ran away with the Chief on its back. We Mohammedans with others followed to find him, until we came to Brukon and finally Konj where we found him dead with his feet fastened with fetters beneath the belly of the roan.'

The *Piesu*, *Hene*, and *Changbei* intermarry. This clan, the *Piesu*, have a subsidiary avoidance, *kampoi*, a kind of fruit.

'When a *Piesu* man dies, we seek for a *kampoi* tree upon which is a single fruit, or perhaps such a fruit has already been plucked and put aside in readiness for the occasion by a clansman's mother's brother. The shell of the *kampoi* is made into a drinking-cup, and this cup is placed over the mouth of the corpse. Before burial, the white clothes in which the body was dressed are taken off and a sheepskin put on in their place. The sheep from which this skin is taken is killed by being trampled to death. When a son has buried his father thus, he may sit on a sheepskin and eat mutton, but his son may not do so, until his father, in turn, has been buried.<sup>2</sup> The *Piesu* clan (as also the *Nantebe*) perform conjuring tricks, called *Nire* (magic), at funerals of important

<sup>1</sup> The last three towns are in the Wa district.

<sup>2</sup> The right to eat the totem animal thus seems reserved to the Elders and forbidden to younger members of the clan.



FIG. 131. The fetters at Koy

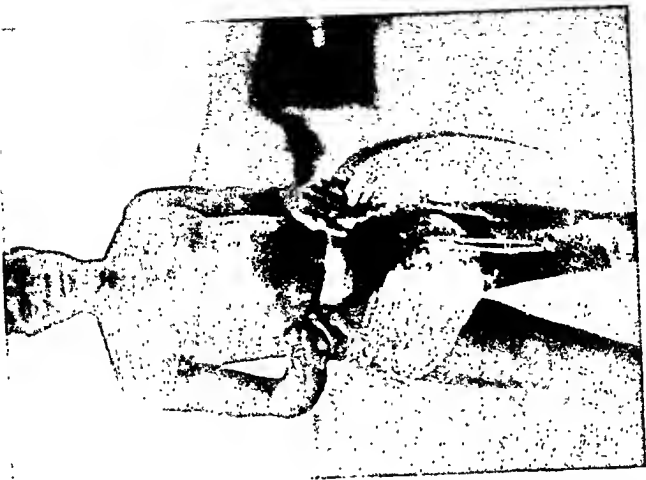


FIG. 132. A *Bala* clansman and his totem at Jifishi

persons—'pierce the tongue with an arrow; pound an infant in a mortar, and bring it to life again, carry fire on the head; eat leaves and to spit cowries'.<sup>1</sup>

*Helvera* (*Jerboa Clan*): 'Our ancestors came from Gyima (neighbourhood of Wa?), thence to Lontoro, and from there to Bulu and Nyamati.' The clan are found to-day in Bulu, Gyiton, and Nyamati.<sup>2</sup> 'Our ancestor was inside a *kuka* tree gathering honey, when the hole by which he had entered closed up; a *jerboa* gnawed a way out for him.'

*Non-bu ar nwam* (*Grindstone hole and Monkey Clan*): *Non* is a nether grindstone, *non-bi* (lit. little *non*) is the upper grindstone, *non-bu* is the hollow at the back of the grinding platform, into which the grain, as it is ground, is pushed out of the way (see Fig 20). 'Our ancestor and all his household had gone to the farm to sow. An infant had been left behind, while its mother went for water. In the absence of every one, a monkey came and picked up the baby and tried to kill it by throwing it behind the grinding place, hence our avoidances.'

We may marry the widows of any clansman and give their daughters in marriage, e.g. if a Watulu girl were to come to our town, we could seize her and give her in marriage and take the bride-price.<sup>3</sup> Our ancestors were Dagaba; we came originally from Wale near Kagyipere (Kujoperi on our maps). The clan is found to-day in Boti, Watulu (Fr.), and Nabulu.

*Kantilvera* (*Small Mouse Clan*<sup>4</sup>): The ancestors of this clan are stated to have come from Chagala in Dagaba country, thence they went to Gwolo and to Nyimati where they encountered the *Helvera*. Our first ancestor was a hunter; he had wounded a buffalo which charged him, when he took refuge in a hole. The buffalo fell and covered up the hole, so that he could not escape until a *kantile*, burrowing, showed him another way out.' Members of the clan are found to-day in Nyimati, Bulu, and Kunkogo.

Here again, as seems not uncommon among the Isala, we appear to have a second clan with the same totem, but with apparently a different origin, as seems indicated by the fact that they now intermarry. It is quite possible, however, that such clans were originally one, but in course of time they lost touch as the different groups

<sup>1</sup> Compare custom at Lobi funeral, see p. 444.

<sup>2</sup> A clan with a similar totem, but possibly of a different origin, is also found in Nabulu and Fachoboi.

<sup>3</sup> This right is constantly quoted as proving kinship between clans now living in different settlements.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote, p. 404.

drifted apart. This other Small Mouse clan state that they came from beside a river called Limielichon (in Dagaba country) near Samuboi (*Anglice* Sanambaw). 'Our ancestor', said my informant, 'was stealing some one's yams, when their owner caught him by the back of the neck, but at that same moment, a *katila* ran out, and our ancestor made the excuse that he had been digging for the mouse.'

*Banvera* (*Iguana Clan*): 'Our ancestors came from Sanjaka (in French Territory, about a day's journey from Tumu). We were formerly Awuna, but we now talk Isala. Our ancestor was one day stealing yams in some one's farm when the owner of the yams caught him and asked what he was doing. Just then, our ancestor saw a *bala* sitting there beneath the yam leaves, and he replied, "Oh, I was just catching this *bala*". Thus he escaped being caught as a thief. He took the *bala* home and told his family that no one must ever kill a *bala*. Each of us has our own *bala*; if a man is blind, his *bala* is blind; if a man has one eye, his *bala* has one eye. If any one hurt our *bala* we would become ill.'<sup>1</sup>

*Nantebvera* (*Slipper Clan*): The avoidance of members of this clan is the wearing of a single slipper. At death this taboo is ceremonially broken, one slipper being put on the left foot of the corpse. Some clansmen state that their ancestors originally came from what is now called Mampruse; thence they went to Takure (in French Territory). Others declare the last-named place was whence they originally came. 'From Takure we went to Sorbele, where we met the *Kolomonvera* (see above history of Leopard clan); here some of us settled, others passing on to Sakalo and Bendai. Others from Sorbele also went to Jifishi. We also avoid monkey and leopard. An ancestor, after our arrival at Sakalo, was helped by these animals.'

After much cross-questioning, I was informed that the slipper avoidance was really only a subsidiary taboo and that leopard was their main avoidance, but my informants in this case seemed very vague as to how, why, and where they had acquired all these taboos. They state, however, that they would swear on a leopard, not on a slipper, which would seem to point to the former as having been the original clan totem. The adoption of what was originally the *toy* of an individual as a subsidiary avoidance of his descendants is a factor which sometimes makes the investigation of clan totemism very confusing and difficult.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At Jifishi I found these reptiles lying about everywhere; they were so tame it was possible to catch them and pick them up (see Fig. 132).

<sup>2</sup> The adoption of other and later avoidances by a less remote ancestor, which

*Nyevera (Crocodile Clan)*: There appear to be at least three branches of this clan, whether originally related or not it is difficult to discover.

(a) The Bojan crocodiles state: 'Our ancestors came from Tapara (in French Territory, about two days journey north of Bojan). We were originally Kasema (Kasena). Our ancestor was called Savai; he was a hunter. He quarrelled with his younger brother who had seduced his wife, and this caused him to leave Tapara. He had been wandering about for five days when he met a crocodile, which led him to a large river. Here he quenched his thirst. Savai settled at Bojan with his wife and children. The descendants of his younger brother are at Tapara to this day. Other clansmen are settled at Nabogagyan, Nanchala, Tafiase, Demagyan, Bapagyabatie. We now speak Isalen. None of the clansmen of these villages intermarry.

'If we killed a crocodile we should become lepers. In Bojan everyone has his (or her) crocodile; when a man is going to die his crocodile dies first. A crocodile comes out of the water to die. It is buried and we lament for it and give it a small piece of white cloth and pour beer over its grave. To kill a crocodile is to kill a Bojan man. No crocodile would seize us without a very good reason. A crocodile resembles its human owner; if you are fat, your crocodile is fat; if you have a sore foot, your crocodile has one too.' This informant added, 'We used to bury any child born with a tooth; now we send such a child to its uncle, and bathe the mother with medicine.'

(b) Crocodile clansmen are also found in the villages of Peen, Vambai, Kopolima, Gyawia, and Sorbele. None of the clanspeople in any of these towns may intermarry, but all may, I was informed, marry any Crocodile person from group (a) and *vice versa*. This would seem to point to these clans being of distinct origin and unrelated.

'Our ancestors told us that we came from a large hill called Chakal-boi (*boi* = *bon* in some Isalen dialects). It is near Daboya.<sup>2</sup> We first settled at old Peen' (now called Nwandono). The reason for the clan leaving its former settlement is given as follows:

'There were two brothers and the wife of one was *enceinte*. She was passing by a smith's forge where some people were sitting, and they began to argue about the sex of her unborn child. To settle the matter sometimes tend to supersede the original clan totem and thus give rise to what look like separate clans, is a very common occurrence among the Isala.

<sup>1</sup> I have seen women and children pushing big seven-foot crocodiles out of the way to enable them to draw water (see Fig. 133).

<sup>2</sup> Another informant gave the name of the town from which they originally came as Yabon (Tampolense) near a hill called Chakal-boi.

they seized the woman and cut her open.<sup>1</sup> The clan account for the presence of its clansmen in other settlements, e.g. at Sorbele, Gyawia, and Kopoloma, by stating that 'sons of a clansman often go to live with their *nera* (maternal uncles) at their mothers' villages'. Another and more cogent reason, however, for the dispersal of this clan was no doubt the fact that they were driven from Peen by the *Kwai* (Dung-beetles) (see history below). 'It was formerly the custom of our clan to bury at once any child born feet first. Had such a child been allowed to live and grow up, and ever joined any others in eating out of the same dish, all would have died. Nowadays such a child is given to its mother's brother, and, in case of a girl, the mother's brother (not the father) will take the bride-price for her when she grows up and is given in marriage.'

(c) Crocodile clansmen are also found in the 'towns' Lipilime, Gyawia, Nyamati, Takura (Fr.), Gwolo, and Kasana, who claim to have a separate origin from the foregoing, and to have come originally from Var or Varo (now in French Territory). The members of this group do not intermarry, but, on the other hand, would marry into the previous Crocodile groups. The matter is further complicated, however, by the fact that this group have exactly the same tradition about the cutting open of a pregnant woman, to account for their migration, the venue of this act, however, being different. In the former case it is stated to have happened near Daboya, in this case at Varo. The following is the tradition as to how the totem was acquired, 'A wife of our ancestor was bathing from a large pot of water after giving birth to a child. She saw a baby crocodile in the water and threw it away. Her infant died. This happened three times. The fourth time, instead of throwing away the crocodile, she carried it to the river, and her child lived. Each of us has his (or her) own crocodile, born the same day as ourselves, and dying with, or just before us. From Varo we came to Yolu (Fr.), from Yolu to Takura, and thence spread to other towns.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An identical tradition is given by yet another group who have crocodile as their totem, but who state that they came originally from Var or Varo (in French territory).

<sup>2</sup> 'The people of the *Nyeva* clan now found in Poloma, Soobe, Lilikese "originally came from Bulu. The *Hen'cera*, in their wanderings, met them there along with the *Pwei* (Leopard), but the latter was really only a *ny*, these *Pwei* being also *Nyeva*. The Bulu people at that time owned the land. The *Hen'cera* settled at Kon, but eventually broke up the *Nyeva* clan and destroyed the town of Bulu. Some women from Lilikese, Poloma, and Soobe had married the *Nyeva* clansmen from Bulu, and when the fighting between the *Hen'cera* and *Nyeva* took place, these women





Fig. 133. A crocodile and a Crocodile clanswoman

*Kwaivera* (*Dung-beetle Clan*): 'Our ancestor had sacrificed to his *dema* (soul),<sup>1</sup> and was cooking some of the meat, when a dung-beetle with its ball of dung fell into the pot. Our ancestor then declared that *Kwai* would be his avoidance. Our clan came originally from *Tampoloma*, near *Daboya*, thence to *Hele*, where some of our kinsmen are to this day, with whom we would not intermarry, but whose women we could seize and give in marriage, and for whom we would take *ha'gyaran* (bride-price). From *Hele* others went forward to *Nieto* and *Peen*. At *Peen* our ancestor, who was a hunter, married a woman of the *Nyeva* (Crocodile) clan. Eventually a quarrel arose between us and the *Nyeva* of *Peen*, and the *Nyeva* left and built a new town also called *Peen*. The old *Peen* had its name changed to *Nwandono*, which means "grown rich on okros", a name given to it in ridicule by the *Nyeva*.'

In the following chapters will be given the modern grouping of these clans on a Territorial basis. Although perhaps not of much interest to my English readers, the information will, it is hoped, form a useful reference for local officials.<sup>2</sup>

returned with their children to their own towns; that is why there are Crocodile clansmen in these towns to-day. The *Bulo* people originally came from *Bushie*'.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 507.

<sup>2</sup> The exact spelling of place-names as given on the maps has not always been adhered to.

THE ISALA (*continued*)*Modern Constitution*

THE various Isala clans whose origins and migrations have been outlined in the previous chapter lived, until very recently, in almost complete isolation *vis-à-vis* their neighbours. The incidence of clan exogamy afforded the main *raison d'être* and excuse for any social intercourse between clan and clan, as wives had to be sought for outside the clan circle.<sup>1</sup> The conception of a ruler who had any control over individuals or groups other than those of his own kindred was in olden times entirely foreign to the popular conception of government. We have changed all that. The various clans which to-day comprise the tribal unit named 'Isala' are grouped in the following Territorial Divisions under the following Territorial Rulers, without much regard for kindred and clan ties. The information contained in these tables was obtained from different sources from what has been recorded heretofore. It thus serves to check and supplement the former data.

<i>Town or Division.</i>	<i>Name of Chief.</i>	<i>Clan or Clans occupying Town.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
(1) TUMU DIVISION			
Tumu. <sup>2</sup>	Kanton II.	Crow ( <i>Gangan</i> ).	There are a few persons in Tumu who, besides having crow for their totem, have crocodile as a <i>toty</i> .
Bojan.	Benpula.	Crocodile.	<i>Nyeva</i> .
Nabogagyan.	Yie.	"	"
Nanchala.	Soan.	"	"
Tafiase.	Basa.	"	"
Demagyan.	Bemie.	"	"
Kyinkyan. <sup>3</sup>	Hau.	Leopard ( <i>Kpei</i> ) <i>Kampoa</i> fruit.	<i>Kampoa</i> or <i>Kampoi</i> is a clan found among the Awuna.
Peen.	Bemie.	Crocodile ( <i>Nyeva</i> ).	—
Vambei.	Wojenaka.	Crocodile.	—
Challo.	Banka.	Frog ( <i>Changbei</i> ).	—
Kasana.	Bawasena.	Crocodile ( <i>Nyon</i> ). <i>Kajera</i> (a tree).	<i>Kajera</i> is an Awuna clan. <i>Nyon</i> , Awuna for crocodile.
Kasanporo.	Sakoro.	<i>Kajera</i> .	See above.

<sup>1</sup> The weekly markets also seem to have been an occasion for fraternizing.

<sup>2</sup> Head-quarters of a Divisional Chief who is also Head-chief of the tribe.

<sup>3</sup> Kyinkyan also contains a few of the *Poy* (Cricket) clan.

<i>Town or Division.</i>	<i>Name of Chief.</i>	<i>Clan or Clans occupying Town.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
(2) KOPUN DIVISION <sup>1</sup>			
Kopun.	Badiyige.	Black Snake.	<i>Dunzene</i> , an Awuna clan.
Wuru.	—	„	—
Kunchogo.	—	„	—
Bano.	—	Bush dog.	<i>Gao kuro</i> . —
Batiesan.	—	„	—
Ballan.	—	<i>Kajera</i> tree.	—
Pudon.	—	A small bird.	<i>Zuna</i> . —
Pudon-Yaro.	—	Cricket.	<i>Chare</i> . —
(3) PINA DIVISION			
Pina.	Zakania.	<i>Kampo</i> a (fruit).	Awuna. —
Tanla.	Basena.	„	—
Netolo.	Bawea.	<i>Deon</i> (python).	„ —
Tamvele.	Bapeo.	Crocodile ( <i>Nyon</i> ).	„ —
Navaro.	Ali.	<i>Kampo</i> a fruit.	„ —
(4) POLIMA DIVISION			
Polima (or Poloma).	Nankpa.	Crown-bird.	<i>Gama</i> . —
Solobele (or Sorbele).	Golo.	„	Also contains other clans who have settled there.
Kopoloma.	Kunkolo.	„	—
Lenwera.	Tangia.	Leopard.	<i>Kpeti</i> . —
Gorema.	Badua.	„	—
Gyton.	Badjodona.	<i>Hosu</i> ?	—
Boti.	Dema.	Grindstone hole ( <i>non-bu</i> ).	Also contains 'Crows', 'Leopards', 'Iguanas'.
Kandea.	Kponyo.	Crown-bird.	<i>Gama</i> . —
Sobebe. <sup>2</sup>	Joho.	„	—
(5) SAKAI DIVISION			
Sakai.	Kyemi.	<i>Hene</i> pot.	—
Konj.	Dimie.	„	Konj was formerly the head town of the <i>Hen'vera</i> , not Sakai.
Nankpovie.	Kangere.	„	—
Lelekese. <sup>3</sup>	Bogo.	„	—
Dene.	Bawie.	„	—
Kowie.	Horo.	<i>Gangachoho</i> and 'Crocodiles', from Bojan.	This town was subject to Sakai, I believe, before the advent of the European.
Bakoala.	Bakyina.	<i>Hene</i> pot.	—
Badisebai.	Luruwie.	„	—

<sup>1</sup> Kopun and the seven villages directly under Kopun are all Awuna and their inhabitants speak the language. They will be referred to again when the Awuna are investigated.

<sup>2</sup> In Sobebe only the Chief and his family are *Gamave*ra (Crown-birds). The town contains to-day 'Crocodile' clansmen (from Bulo), a few 'Crows' from Tumu, some 'Leopards', some *Kolomonvera*, and a few of the Monkey clan.

<sup>3</sup> Also contains a compound of Crocodile-clan people from Bulo.

<i>Town or Division.</i>	<i>Name of Chief.</i>	<i>Clan or Clans occupying Town.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
Sakalo.	Bayobo.	Slipper ( <i>Nantebe</i> ).	These clans, not <i>Hene</i> , were formerly quite independent of Sakai.
Sentie.	Gbene.	Sheep ( <i>Nantebe</i> ).	—
Gyigyer.	Bachosobea.	"	—
Bandai.	Dansea.	Slipper ( <i>Nantebe</i> ).	—

## (6) WALEMBELE DIVISION

Walembele.	Samaiyela.	Porcupine.	<i>Sam.</i>
Bugobele.	Votone.	"	"
Taso.	Boso.	"	"
Kalfo.	Lurwie.	"	"
Manduo.	Bakuri.	Dung-beetle ( <i>Kwai</i> ).	Formerly independent; put under Walembele by British.
Kurobele.	Bio.	"	—
Bikyembe.	Beita.	Small mouse ( <i>Kantile</i> ).	As above.

## (7) DOLBEZAN DIVISION

Dolbezan.	Horo.	<i>Gangachomo</i> (a kind of wood).	Dolbezan was originally called Kpan. The name Dolbezan was that of a leader who rallied the townsmen to resist Babatu.
Nabiewale.	Nyuda.	Skin of <i>Weme we'tan</i> .	—
Gyambogo.	Ballo.	"	—
Igant.	Babinwie.	Crow ( <i>Gangan</i> ).	The Chief is not of the clan of the people.
Simboro.	Hahean.	Python ( <i>Dol</i> ).	—
Nwanchan.	Nadimie.	<i>Gangachomo</i> .	With a subsidiary avoidance of <i>Dol</i> (python).
Bopulima.	?	?	—
Babugyan.	Batun.	Monkey ( <i>Nwan</i> ).	These seven villages had already nominally come under Dolbezan before the advent of the European, having united under that town against Babatu.

## 8) ASANTEGYAN DIVISION

Asantegyan.	Bamoa.	Small mouse.	This clan is sometimes coupled with horse, and becomes <i>Gyau</i> or <i>Kantile</i> . I am informed that the inhabitants were originally <i>Hen'vera</i> , and that their totem was originally only a <i>tyg</i> .
Gwenavishi.	Babatu. <sup>1</sup>	"	—
Gosi.	Asema.	"	—
Luro.	—	<i>Sal</i> or <i>Sol</i> (a smith's hammer).	—
Nyamanea.	—	—	There are only two persons living here; clans not known to my informant.

<sup>1</sup> This man was born on the day Babatu, the slave raider, came to the town.

<i>Town or Division.</i>	<i>Name of Chief.</i>	<i>Clan or Clans occupying Town.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
(9) NABULO DIVISION			
Nabulo.	Bengbogbo.	Leopard ( <i>Kpei</i> ). Jerboa ( <i>Hel</i> ).	—
Fachoboi.	Komoa.	Jerboa ( <i>Hel</i> ).	—
Du.	Pau.	Crocodile ( <i>Nyera</i> ).	—
Hamboi.	Gyikpivie.	"	Hamboi is also called Bauwesebele. There is a subsidiary avoidance of dry flour ( <i>numbusu</i> ).
Koma.	Goshi.	Frog ( <i>Samporo</i> ).	These people state they came from Mampruse, and still talk that language as well as Isalen. Note the word used for 'Frog'; compare <i>Changbei</i> .
Wakalebele.	Asane.	Small mouse and horse ( <i>Gyau ar Kantile</i> ).	Town also contains a few members of Crow clan.
(10) DASIMA DIVISION <sup>1</sup>			
Dasima.	Horo.	Leopard ( <i>Kpei</i> ).	The Chief is a <i>Hel</i> (Jerboa); the town also contains 'Crocodiles' from Bulo, and 'Slipper' clansmen.
Duvie.	Ganchoa.	Slipper ( <i>Nantebe</i> ).	—
Kuntulo.	Gbero.	Crocodile ( <i>Nyera</i> ).	—
Jifishi.	Bagulo.	Iguana ( <i>Ban or Bala</i> ).	Also contains 'Leopards', 'Monkeys', and some of the Slipper clan.
Nyevale.	Towie.	Jerboa ( <i>Hel</i> ).	—
Timie.	Basublo.	?	—
Dunonyole.	?	?	Only four or five people now in this settlement.
(11) BULO DIVISION			
Bulo.	Bata.	Leopard ( <i>Kpei</i> ).	The Chief, 'who was appointed by Europeans who did not know about clans', belongs to the <i>Kamfoi</i> clan.
Kwola.	Babogo.	Crown-bird ( <i>Gama</i> ).	—
Ghalo.	Yakuba.	A small pot, <i>Bugulzie</i> .	Whether this is <i>Hene</i> under a different name, I omitted to inquire.
Kuni.	Kuri.	"	—
Kpanana.	Tengaga.	Slipper ( <i>Nantebe</i> ).	—
(12) GBOLO DIVISION			
Gbolo.	Kazea.	Crown-bird ( <i>Gama</i> ).	Gbolo (or Gwolo) also contains members of the Crocodile clan (from Kasana) and of <i>Kantile</i> .
Gyawia.	Korwie.	Crocodile ( <i>Nyera</i> ).	The town also contains some of Porcupine clans who fled from Walembale in the time of Babatu's raids.

<sup>1</sup> Dasima is also pronounced Desima.

<i>Town or Division.</i>	<i>Name of Chief.</i>	<i>Clan or Clans occupying Town.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
Lipilime.	Gbane.	Crocodile ( <i>Nyeva</i> ).	—
Kusalo.	Babanawe.	Sheep ( <i>Piesu</i> ).	Also contains <i>Kampoi</i> who fled to Gwolo in time of Babatu.
Konkogo.	Vacant in Sept. 1929.	Crocodile ( <i>Nyeva</i> ).	Also contains a few <i>Kantile</i> and <i>Piesu</i> (sheep) clansmen.
Nyamati.	Harona (alias Baname).	Jerboa ( <i>Hel</i> ), Crocodile ( <i>Nyeva</i> ), Leopard ( <i>Kpeti</i> ), Sheep ( <i>Piesu</i> ), Small mouse ( <i>Kantile</i> ).	The <i>Helvera</i> (Jerboa) were the original clan.

An analysis of the foregoing tables shows that the district is divided into twelve divisions, each nominally in charge of a Divisional Chief, who, under Government, besides being Chief of his own town, exercises authority over a number of other towns or clan settlements, which for administrative purposes have been placed under him. Of these twelve Divisional Chiefs, one, that of Tumu, has also been constituted Head-chief over all the divisions. It is doubtful if any of the Chiefs of Divisions, or even the Sub-chiefs of sub-divisions, were the former heads even of their own local groups. In some cases they cannot lay claim even to belong to the clans over whom they are set. Doubtless the disadvantages and anomalies of the present system cannot be laid entirely at our door. The jumbling-up of clans, and the germ of the conception of territorial, as opposed to clan groupings, had no doubt begun to be manifest shortly before the advent of Europeans. Men of wealth or outstanding ability had already arisen in some of the clan settlements, and in the turmoil and chaos resulting from the depredations of the slave-raiding Zabarma, mixed clans had sometimes rallied round such natural leaders for protection and leadership. Tangia and Dobeza were examples of this.

The word used for Chief in the Isalen language tells its own story. *Koro*, the term now employed to designate the secular Government-made Chief, as distinct from the 'owner of the land', meant, originally, any man of wealth or substance in a clan. Any one with more cattle or larger farms or more sons and kindred than his neighbours was a *koro*. As such, he was accorded a certain respect and occupied a position of minor authority among his neighbours. A *koro* had not, however, any administrative, executive, or religious powers. All such were vested in the hands of the *Tinteintina* (the *Ten'dana*, with whose functions we have now become familiar elsewhere). The modern

Government-made chief among the Isala (and elsewhere) came into being somewhat as follows. I am informed everywhere that when Europeans first became known in these parts and required the presence of some one in authority, the one idea of those who wielded real authority in the clan was to keep out of these strangers' way. The hereditary elders in almost every case thrust forward some individual who had nothing to lose and had the pluck or the impudence to agree to go. These persons at first became merely the mediums through whom the orders of the European were passed on to those in authority. When the country and the conditions became gradually more settled and some kind of Native Administration came to be evolved, these go-betweens found themselves in many cases invested with more titular authority than had ever been wielded by even the real Elders of the clan. The scramble for these secular offices thus began and has continued ever since; the spiritual leaders of the clans, who were also the real Chiefs, became of less and less account.

*Succession to Modern Office of Chief:* When a vacancy occurs among the Government-made chiefs, there do not appear to be any particular rules of succession governing the selection of a successor. He may be the late Chief's brother (and heir), his son, some other relative, or almost any one at all who has money to offer in bribes to the electors. In fact, in practice, wealth is probably the deciding factor, although, in theory, character and kinship are supposed to be taken into account. Bribes, or presents, as they are called, are without doubt freely given and received. The evils of the system are sometimes further aggravated owing to the fact that candidates may go outside the circle of their own town and electors (who are the heads of the Sections, and in turn are supposed to consult every one under them) and canvass their immediate Head-chief and even their indirect Head-chief—all of whom have to be given 'presents'.

'A *Tinteintina* can never become rich; his business is to look after the interests of the clan; he can therefore never compete for the office of *Koro* (Chief).'

There is little doubt in my mind that the present system leaves much to be desired. Chiefs, whose selection rests upon such an unsatisfactory basis, tend more and more to become recruited from individuals who are then raised to power without understanding of the traditional obligations which required the former rulers to be trustees for and custodians of their people. The modern holder of the office has had to pay heavily for it. Having once obtained the



post, it is apt to be regarded as a sinecure and a means of recouping the heavy expenses incurred.

Succession to a Chieftainship and succession to a Chief's property are quite distinct. The idea of what in Ashanti we should call 'Stool property' is unknown. The wealth often amassed by Chiefs goes entirely to enrich themselves and their brothers and sons. Such Chiefs tend to become trustees for no one but their own family group. They live, moreover, outside the circle which embraces the religious life of their people. With this they have little concern, being quite content to leave all such unprofitable matters in the hands of the former custodians of the clan. Where we find Government-made Chiefs who are not even of the same clan as their subjects—which must be the case where amalgamations on any large scale have taken place—a further restraint on cupidity and extortion is removed.

*Sources of Revenue of a Present-day Territorial Ruler:* (a) Summons fees, 3s. 6d. to 10s.; a peculiar custom prevails whereby a plaintiff deposits such a sum as he wishes, thereby compelling the defendant to lay down a similar amount. The one who loses his case forfeits his deposit, plus whatever fine is imposed. The plaintiff himself carries to the defendant the Chief's summons (a staff) to appear before the Court.

The Chief pockets fees and fines. A Chief may not summon the subjects of his sub-chief, but may later hear an appeal from a lower Court. The *Tinteintina* and Elders, in theory, are supposed to act as advisers and councillors of the Chief, but I am informed that in practice they are seldom or never called upon to do so. In any case they do not share any fees or fines imposed by the Chief on the litigants.

The *Tinteintina* and Elders (whose status will be discussed presently) are still supposed to settle cases in which any religious element enters, e.g. certain cases of theft, where the injured party has invoked a god to punish the thief, and cases where blood is shed on the land.<sup>1</sup> Besides court fees and fines, a Chief may receive contributions of first-fruits from his own subjects and from sub-chiefs—so many baskets of corn or yams. These contributions seem more or less voluntary and are not expected when the crops have been bad. They were the former perquisite of the *Tinteintina*.

The subjects of a Chief have to turn out to work on the Chief's

<sup>1</sup> In any town, the great majority of petty disputes are undoubtedly still settled by the heads of the family groups without any reference to the Chief.

farm at sowing-time and harvest, and a Head-chief will call on sub-chiefs, according to a kind of rough roster, to supply labour for his farms. This privilege, on the part of an unscrupulous Chief, is frequently considerably abused. Newly appointed sub-chiefs give 'presents' of cows and sheep to their Head-chief.

Chiefs claim a hind leg of all large animals killed by hunters, and the ground tusks of elephants killed, 'but the ground tusk of an elephant found dead goes to the owner of the land'.

*Treasure Trove:* A certain Chief informed me, that, 'if the owner cannot be traced, the thing, whatever it was, would be left, for if the finder were to take it he would die'. There is little doubt but that such things went, in the not very remote past, to the owner of the land.

Subjects help to build and keep a Chief's house in repair. Chiefs sometimes trade in cattle, and some even run motor lorries for passenger services.

In my opinion the whole question of the status and functions of many of the Government-made chiefs in the Northern Territories requires careful investigation. It must be borne in mind that the majority of the subjects of these rulers are still in a very primitive state, and are faced with an institution which they do not yet understand. Among such people abuses which would not be tolerated for a moment by more sophisticated subjects<sup>1</sup> are often allowed to continue without any complaints being lodged before the proper European authorities—a fact which is fully appreciated and of which advantage is taken by some of the more unscrupulous of these potentates.

<sup>1</sup> For example, among the Ashanti.

THE ISALA (*continued*)*The Clan Settlement. Possible Origin of Isala Totemism*

THE Isala tribe at the present day comprises the score or so clans whose names and histories have now been recorded. A clan may either have grown and expanded, keeping to its original settlement, or else some of its members may have wandered further afield, founding new towns, while retaining (generally)<sup>1</sup> the original totem and hence clan name, and still refraining from intermarriage with their former kinsmen. As has been clearly demonstrated, I think, only a few Isala clans had a common origin, the scattered units which form the tribe being drawn for the most part from almost every point of the compass. The constitution of a single clan will now be examined in more detail.

The clan settlement or town is called *gyan*<sup>2</sup> (pl. *gyase*); it is composed of so many sections or lesser kindred-groups called *gyan-balea* (s. *gyan-bale*), which consist, in turn, of separate family compounds (*dese*). These compounds, again, are sub-divided into many separate suites (*dea*), each being the living-quarters of a small family group—of brothers, sons, grandsons—of the head of the compound. Isala compounds are not scattered, like those of the Nankanse, for example. *Dea* upon *dea* is generally built on to the original *dea* until the home of a family group grows into that of a kindred group and may assume the appearance almost of a compact little township or homestead. The houses are oblong with flat roofs; the yards between the various family quarters are almost like a village street (see Figs 134 and 135). The inmates can walk for a considerable distance over the flat roofs, upon which the women work, winnowing corn, &c. (see Fig. 136). A number of *dese*, each under its *dea tina* (*yiri dana* in Nankane), form a section (*gyanbale*) which is under the senior of all the *dea tamma*, who is known as *Nehean* (pl. *Nehese*). This word means simply 'Elder'. The head of all the combined *gyanbalea* (sections) is the *Gyan-tina* or *Tinteintina*. He was, and in some respects still is, the real head of the clan. His titles mean respectively 'master of the town', 'owner of the

<sup>1</sup> But see p. 496.

<sup>2</sup> Changing into the *gyen*, *zan*, *san kyan*, as the suffix in place-names. The word is also heard *tan*, pl. *tase*, which links it up with *teya*, *tey* (land) in other dialects.



FIG. 134. An Isala compound



FIG. 135. A scene from the roof of an Isala compound



FIG. 136. On the flat roof of an Isala compound



FIG. 137. The late Salafu, who was a great hunter

land.' We thus find once more under other names, but differing only very slightly in detail, a similar clan organization and clan settlement to those recorded for the Moshi-speaking group of tribes.

Taking one clan—the *Gangavera*—in greater detail, we find that it is composed of five sections (*gyanbalea*) named as follows:

- |             |                          |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Bendema. | 4. Nanyoala (or Nyevea). |
| 2. Tworo.   | 5. Kanton.               |
| 3. Takurie. |                          |

Each of these sections is under an Elder (*Nehean*, pl. *Nehese*). Their names, in the above order, are; (1) Bakyare, (2) Mabildia, (3) Ngyeabaga, (4) Nankene, (5) Dimoa. No. 5, Dimoa, besides being the Elder in his own section, is also *Tinteintina*. These five *gyanbalea* (sections) form the *gyan* (settlement) of the *Gangavera* (the Crow clan). They are in turn composed of the following *dese*, an aggregate of which forms the kindred-group or section.

1. *Bendema Section*: This contains only one such group in one homestead, comprising, however, many separate families.

2. *Tworo Section*: This consists of three<sup>1</sup> separate homesteads, known as Bildia, Batine,<sup>2</sup> and Chibagela; each of these contains many families.

3. *Takurie Section*: This consists of one homestead; generation after generation having built on to the original compound.

4. *Nyevea Section*: This section consists of four separate homesteads, Nankene, Nabon, Bengyan (alias Bayovie), and Nasea. 'These separate compounds came to be built because of quarrels between the wives of different members of the family.'

5. *Kanton Section*: It consists of four homesteads: Dimoa, Sanyu, Sugol, and Haluri.

*Succession to the Tinteintinaship*: A *Tinteintina* (deriv. *Tintein* or *Tinten*, land; and suffix *tina*, owner of, master of, trustee; also called *Gyantina*, master of the *gyan*, clan settlement), is succeeded by his next eldest brother or half-brother; when the brothers are all dead, the eldest son among the sons of all the brothers or half-brothers, irrespective of the seniority of the father, succeeds. Although the successor is known, it is necessary for all the Elders to meet and consult the *worogo* (soothsayer) to find out if the new *Tinteintina* is

<sup>1</sup> In some cases, among the Isala, as has been noted among other tribes, the eldest son may 'go out' and found a new compound instead of building an addition on to the parental home.

<sup>2</sup> Batine, besides being a head of a household, holds the position of *Venetina*, an office which will be explained presently.

acceptable to the spirits and gods—to see if he has a good head; to see if the land would prosper under him; to find out if women would be prolific. If an unfavourable reply is received to these questions sacrifices and offerings will continue to be made until the auspices become favourable.

Installing a *Tinteintina*<sup>1</sup> in office is known as 'giving him a wife' (*Kan o bal amo apo*). 'A really bad man might be passed over<sup>2</sup> and the office be given to his younger brother who would not, however, inherit the family property, which would go to the senior.' A list of the *Tinteintamma* of the Crow clan has been given in the previous chapter. My friend, Dimoa, the present holder of the office, also gave the names of his predecessors. These correspond with the previous list save for the inevitable variations in pronunciation and the addition of two names, those of Balenana and Lipele. The dress of a *Tinteintina* consisted of a ram's or leopard's skin and a wide-brimmed hat; he also carried a cow- or horse-tail in his hand.

'A *Tinteintina* must not on any account think evil about any one; his whole mind must be set upon the crops being plentiful, and upon women bearing children. Were he secretly to wish any one's death, he would thereby cause his own. He may only admonish evil-doers in public.'

*Duties of Tinteintina:* He was head of the clan, not by virtue of 'bows and arrows' or physical strength, but by reason of his spiritual powers. He was respected because: (a) he was descended from the original ancestor of the clan and was its senior living member; (b) the whole clan agreed to serve under him; (c) he was in charge of the ancestral spirits and gods, in virtue of which he owned the land of the clan. The sanctions at his disposal were purely spiritual; public opinion was behind him in all he did; his anger was sufficient to bring the most truculent to reason; he never abused or cursed anyone; it was forbidden for him to do so, unless at a public assembly of the clan.

His privileges, most of which have now been usurped by the secular Chiefs, included:

(a) Help on his farms, but this was not demanded as of right, but arranged for by the Elders of his section.

(b) First-fruits, but these were never solicited. 'A *Tinteintina* would visit the sections and inquire after the health of the inmates who would give him perhaps a sheep or goat or a basket of grain.'

<sup>1</sup> The plural of *Tinteintina* is *Tinteintamma*.

<sup>2</sup> Some clans state that this could not be done, but that sacrifices and offerings would be made in order that the man's nature might improve.

(c) Part of all large animals killed, but this he afterwards shared with the *Nehese* (Elders).

(d) All animals found dead in the bush, e.g. a dead elephant, the finder would report to the *Tinteintina*; the tusks would be sold by him and the proceeds divided by him between himself and the Elders. In the case of an elephant killed by a hunter, the *Tinteintina* took only the tusk touching the ground.

(e) All lost things and persons or things without an owner belonged to him, but he informed the Elders before making use of such.

(f) A *Tinteintina* might own a slave, provided he was not a clansman, but it was taboo for him to sell a clansman; 'the town would come to ruin did he do so'.

(g) A death was reported at once to him 'because all people were his'. Births were not reported, but the child would later be shown to him and receive his blessing.

(h) The *Tinteintina* received reports from his Elders daily in the dry season, and on the local market<sup>1</sup> day in the wet season; he did not act in anything without consulting them. 'Can a man act by himself?' If there were a *Koro* (a rich man) in the town he was included among those whose advice was asked, as 'some of his cows might be required of him'.

(i) A *Tinteintina* did not go to war; while the Elders went, he remained behind to pray. 'A *Tinteintina's* duty was to be humble, never to be overbearing, and always to act in conjunction with his Elders. The prosperity of the "town" depended upon this.'

Succession to the position of *Nebean* in a section follows the same rules as for a *Gyantina*. The *Tinteintina* was (and still is) assisted by a person known as '*Venetina*' (owner of the *Vene* or shrine). This official is under the *Tinteintina*, and his duties seem to begin and end in making the actual sacrifices. Among the Crow clan, this office descends in one family, which traces descent from an ancestor who was

<sup>1</sup> The Crow clan used to attend the following markets, even in olden times, when a kind of truce from inter-clan hostility and suspicion was recognized: Bojan (the Crocodile clan), Don, now in French territory, an Awuna settlement, Kasana (Awuna), Kɔŋ (Hen'vera), Poloma (Gamvera), Kopoloma (Gamvera). The Crow clan at the present day name the days of the week by market days, of which there are six, i.e. Sakai-yawa (*yawa* = market), Polima-yawa, Gyawia-yawa, Tumuyawa, Kopoloma-yawa, Kɔŋ-yawa, the seventh day again coming round to Sakai-yawa. The market day for each town thus falls on the same day of the week every forty-two days, and comes round every seventh day. Compare the interval between the *Adae* in Ashanti.



a 'bastard', i.e. a *Tolo bi*, the child of a sister who has remained in her parents' compound instead of marrying and going out to live with the clan of her husband (compare the Nankane *Pugera* or *Ta bia*). The story given to account for this is as follows. 'A quarrel arose in a family. A son, who was a *Tolo bi*, separated the combatants by placing a calabash of ashes on the ground between them. He was rewarded by being placed in charge of the *Vene* (shrine) and having a knife put in his hand with which to perform the sacrifices.' The office of *Venetina* has continued in this family ever since. The present holder of the office at Tumu, Batine, belongs to the Section called Tworo, which means ashes.<sup>1</sup>

An investigation of the various current traditions accounting for the origin of totemism among these tribes results in disclosing a uniform basis to all these legends. An ancestor had been befriended—or in some cases injured—by something, an animal, reptile, bird, inanimate object, or ill luck or misfortune had followed on the commission of some supposed offence in word or deed. The ancestor had, in consequence, decided it was necessary for his future well-being to associate himself with that particular event, the outstanding feature in which became the concrete symbol of this association. There appears to be little or no distinction, it will be noted, between having been harmed by something and having been befriended by it. Both events are taken amply to justify the conclusion that all the time, without his having known it, the animal, or whatever it might be, had been *en rapport* with the ancestor.

A man, for example, considers he has been befriended by a crocodile; henceforth he will not willingly molest crocodiles. During his lifetime a like solicitude is enjoined upon his family. In some cases the bond existing between the man and this object is symbolized by the making of some shrine or 'medicine', or by the performance of some ritual. At this stage the ancestor seems to have been in possession of what the Isala to-day call a *Tɔŋ* (pl. *Toma*), i.e. a totem which is as yet purely personal to one man. The next development appears to be for this avoidance to become hereditary, or at any rate one to be observed by anyone who takes part in the rites in connexion with it. In many, but not, as we have seen, in all cases, the striking feature—the avoidance—next tends to become used as the convenient title by which those descended from the ancestor who first instituted the taboo are known, or by which they describe themselves. Often this title is used to the extent of causing

<sup>1</sup> Compare the office of *Bogomala* among the Dagaba, see footnote, p. 408.

the ultimate dropping of the ancestor's own name. His descendants become known as 'the avoiders of such and such a thing', rather than as 'the descendants of So-and-so'.<sup>1</sup> Such, very briefly, appears to be the history of the origin of totemism in these parts, unless we are to ignore the mass of evidence here presented and dismiss it all as being in the nature of aetiological myths, invented by the narrators to account for something, the real origin of which they have long ago forgotten. The stories told to account for the acquisition of the clan taboos are not, however, regarded in the light of mythical events which happened and could only have happened in a bygone, half mythical age. To the Isala man and woman of to-day such happenings seem perfectly natural, so much so that for them exactly similar adventures may still befall any man, whereby he will acquire a *tɔy*.

An expression which is often heard among the Isala is, 'That is not their real avoidance, it is only a *tɔy*'.<sup>2</sup> The acquisition of *toma* at the present day appears to be by a very similar process to that by which the original clan totems were acquired. Any thing or any event out of the ordinary may result in the acquisition of a *tɔy* by the person who has the experience. A hunter, wandering in the bush, is struck by the unusual behaviour of some animal, bird, or reptile; or he may see some peculiarly shaped stone or stick, or a parasitic plant, or perhaps he will find a snake has come into his house. He may not, at the time, pay much heed to what he has seen, but sooner or later he will have a presentiment which grows more and more into a certainty, that the event is in some way associated with him, and that if he ignores it misfortune will surely befall him. He resorts, accordingly, to the inevitable *vorogo* (soothsayer). The latter may tell the consultant that what he has seen is a '*tɔy*' and that he must immediately take steps about it or he will 'become mad' and find himself 'running off to the bush', or he may 'become blind'. The process of thought governing the whole affair seems well described in the French phrase, *folie de doute*. 'A *tɔy* descends from father to son, but a son may find that his father's *tɔy* does not help him and throw it away.' The 'it' is the medicine, shrine or rite which is generally associated with the original cult. 'A *tɔy* helps a man in hunting and farming and to get children.'

The following is an account of how a particular section<sup>3</sup> of the Crow clan acquired Crocodile as their *tɔy*.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XLVI.

<sup>2</sup> It is indeed very probable that some of the 'clans' recorded are really *toma*; *toma* (plural of *tɔy*).

<sup>3</sup> The *Nanyoala*.

An ancestor of this kindred-group—within the Crow clan—called Basambal, was a hunter. 'One day while out hunting he became very thirsty; suddenly he saw the white droppings of a crocodile on the ground. Scraping with his foot, he saw that the soil was damp. He dug down a little way and found water and drank and was about to pass on when everything became dark before his eyes. He turned back and immediately regained his sight. This happened several times until he decided to pick up the droppings. He put them in his bag and returned home. On reaching home he immediately consulted a *vorogo* (soothsayer) who told him that what he had found was a *tsy*. Basambal told his father and his brothers what had happened, but they laughed at him and told him that he had gone to find meat, not to pick up *toma*, and they would have nothing to do with it. Basambal made a shrine for his *tsy*, putting the crocodile droppings inside it, sacrificing a goat upon it, and asking it to help him in hunting. After doing all this he had great good fortune, killing twenty out of twenty-one bush-cows in a herd.' The story goes on to relate how the last bush-cow was killed with a fairy on its back and ends, 'Thus it came about that the descendants of Basambal have a crocodile for their *tsy*'.

The power in a *tsy* may be used by a soothsayer for consulting. The horns of the last bush-cow killed by Basambal, as narrated above, are now part of a soothsayer's shrine near the smith's forge at Tumu, which was much frequented by my hunter friend, the late Salafu (see Fig. 137).

A *tsy* may also become the guardian spirit of a child. There exist kindred-groups to-day, among the Isala, where a *tsy* of a comparatively recent ancestor which has become hereditary has assumed such prominence as to obscure for the uninformed the original origin of these groups. They now use the *tsy* name to designate themselves in preference to their original clan totem name. Asantegyan and several small neighbouring settlements are a good example of this. Probably they formerly were all *Hen'vera*, although now known by other 'clan' names. In this manner, what was not so very long ago the private and newly acquired avoidance of an individual may blossom forth among his near descendants as a new totemic group with all the outward appearance, to the uninformed, of an institution of hoary antiquity. It would thus appear to be only a matter of time before a *tsy* might become a clan totem, and the former was not improbably everywhere the origin of the latter.

THE ISALA (*continued*)*Birth, Puberty, Marriage, and Death*

**BIRTH.** As soon as a woman becomes *enceinte* her husband will go and consult (*vuge*) a soothsayer (*vorogo*). He will find out from him if his wife, before she was born, had ever declared she did not want a child. If she had said so, he will take steps to undo the unfortunate utterance.<sup>1</sup> If it is the woman's first child, no one may draw attention publicly to the fact that she has conceived until the following ceremony has been performed. Her husband, after consulting a soothsayer, selects one of his wife's sisters to come and pour water (*llean ahe*) on the pregnant girl. She arrives from her town secretly and enters her brother-in-law's compound without her sister knowing anything about it. When all is quiet, she goes to her brother-in-law's hut, where he lies asleep with his wife, wakens him quietly, and bids him move aside. She then empties a calabash of water over her sister, saying as she does so, '*La munu ntea me choa*' (Take the flour<sup>2</sup> and give me the seed). Next morning the man gives his sister-in-law a guinea-fowl and five hundred cowries and she returns home, but before doing so she twists a *dawa dawa* fibre belt which she gives to her sister to put on. This may not be removed until she gives birth. A new 'black' string girdle is then substituted. After the ceremony of splashing the water 'those who have the right to joke with her' will laugh at her, and draw attention to her condition, and call her a 'thief', and she will cry if she is young.

Once a woman has become *enceinte* she may not have sexual intercourse with any one but her own husband.<sup>3</sup> Should she do so, it is supposed that she will experience difficulty in bringing forth, unless

<sup>1</sup> A similar belief and custom exist among some of the tribes of the Moshi group. See Chapter V.

<sup>2</sup> *Dawa dawa* seeds ground into flour.

<sup>3</sup> Among some of the Isala and Kasena clans it is quite a recognized institution for a wife to have a lover, the fact being well known to her husband, who refers openly to this man as '*me bal bela*' (my wife's lover), with the reciprocal '*me bela bala*' (my lover's husband). This man will help the husband in his farm work. All children belong, of course, to the legitimate husband. Chastity before marriage is not expected. See also p. 502 where this *ménage de trois* is more fully described. A similar custom has already been noted among the Dagaba.

she confesses. The afterbirth, together with the string girdle mentioned above, are buried in a pot on the midden heap. The navel string is not put in the wall of the hut, as is the custom among some tribes; it is buried anywhere. Women after childbirth remain indoors, three days for a boy, four for a girl. Coming outside for the first time is made the occasion for the following ceremony. Soon after the child is born, the husband sets out for the village of his mother's brother, taking with him a white cock or a white hen, according to the sex of the child. He must do everything in complete silence and must not look behind him. His uncle (*nera*)<sup>1</sup> will receive the fowl and hand him some medicine called *kanton luri* (fairy medicine), and he will return home, again in silence.

On the third or fourth night as the case may be, 'when every one is asleep and not even a dog barking, or any one coughing', the ladder is set up against the wall of the hut.<sup>2</sup> The mother of the infant climbs on the flat roof and bathes her arms and breasts with a decoction made from the medicine which the husband had brought from his uncle's town. Next the husband's mother's younger 'sister' climbs upon the roof, while another woman—either the man's senior wife, or a woman from his mother's town—stands below the ladder, holding the infant. This female addresses the woman on the roof saying, 'The infant wants to go up on the roof', and hands up the child. The woman on the roof then says, 'The child wants to enter the room', and hands it down again. This performance is repeated three or four times, according to the sex of the child, and the last time the child is bathed on the roof with the medicine. It is then taken back into the hut. Mother and child may in future come freely from their room into the compound yard.

The clitoris of a female child is removed from three to ten days after birth. The operation is called *kari* or *lese, mengyi*. It is performed by a man supposed to be skilled in the work. The reasons given for removing it are: (a) that its non-removal would obstruct the entrance of the penis, (b) that its removal makes delivery more easy, (c) ridicule, if not 'cut'. There is also some reluctance shown in taking

<sup>1</sup> The Isala saying, '*Niara na sangon*' (Nephews are hawks) has already been noted. It illustrates the right of the nephew 'to go to the maternal uncle's compound and take what he requires. Not only so, but the nephew may "steal" openly from any one in that town, just as a man has a right to his elder brother's things and his father's things.'

<sup>2</sup> It had been removed to prevent any one getting up on the flat roof above the heads of mother and child—a taboo.

by a boy, will come to take her daughter and grandchild home. This woman carries a knife in her hand, and complete silence is enjoined; the boy carries a knobkerrie (*tangul*). When she reaches the door of the hut where her daughter and the infant live she draws the blade of the knife across the ground three or four times, according to the sex of the child, lays the knife down, enters the hut, and takes the child out of its mother's arms. She then picks up the knife again and passes outside the compound where she sits down and waits until her daughter brings her food.<sup>1</sup> After eating this they all set off for the young mother's home village. Here mother and child will remain for a month or more—the time will largely depend on what the soothsayer may say. At the end of this time her husband will go to his parents-in-law's town to 'beg' for his wife and child. He takes a guinea-fowl and a fowl, and carries a log of firewood. He sleeps at his mother-in-law's compound, and a day is arranged for his wife and child to return home. On that day the husband's mother will go and bring them back. Should his wife and child be allowed to remain at the home of his in-laws until the child is walking, the husband has to pay 3,000 cowries (about 3s.) before they are permitted to return. It must not be forgotten that a man does not resume cohabitation with his wife for about three years after she has borne him a child.

*Puberty:* A woman during her menstrual periods is not regarded as tainted with uncleanness to the extent to be found in Ashanti. Contact with such an one, however, 'may spoil a man's fetishes and might also damage the crops'. The latter are, accordingly, often protected with black crosses marked on flat stones.<sup>2</sup> There does not appear to be any special initiation ceremony for either of the sexes in connexion with reaching puberty.

*Marriage:* When a youth sees a girl whom he wishes to marry, he gives her a present of about 200 cowries. This gift is known as *sokore morwie*. If she accepts it she will give it to her mother and will tell her that she loves the man. The suitor will next take some salt and kola-nuts and visit the girl's parents with these gifts which are known by the name of *toba* (lit. tobacco) (showing perhaps that the salt and kola-nuts are a later substitute for what was formerly tobacco). The suitor also makes friends with the girl's brother, who, at this stage of the

<sup>1</sup> This custom appears to be almost identical with that described as practised by the Dagaba. See p. 418.

<sup>2</sup> A similar custom is found among the Awuna. Among the Nankanse the same symbols are painted on stones on the farms to protect the crops against 'bad trees'.

courtship, acts as a negotiator between the suitor and the girl's parents. The suitor will be told when to bring the corn for the beer known as *hal-gya-san* (beer for seeking woman). The three days during which his future mother-in-law is preparing the beer are spent by the suitor at his future wife's home. When the beer is ready, it is divided into three portions; one for the father and his brothers, one for the girl's brothers, and the third for the girl's 'mothers'. The suitor also gives 1,000 cowries to each group and 100 kola-nuts (to the males only). These gifts are known as *hal-gya-marwie* (cowries for seeking woman). The suitor then returns home.

A few days later, the bride is escorted to the bridegroom's village by the married women from her household, accompanied by a man known as *sipatoru*. He is always the son of a clanswoman from the bridegroom's town who has married a clansman of the bride, in her town (compare *Isiga* in Nankane). The bride is first taken to the house of a clanswoman of her own who has married a clansman of the bridegroom; a son of this couple becomes the bridegroom's *sipatoru*. The bridegroom kills a goat, and his friends bring guinea-fowls and corn. When night comes, the bride is taken by the mother of the *sipatoru* to the compound of the bridegroom's father (or elder brother, as the case may be). All the women sound the shrill cry called '*Kuli*' in Isalen, and the men yell '*Kyebu*!' (a war cry). After the strangers have all departed, the bride is led to the bridegroom's room by his mother.

Some time after, in many cases years later, the father of the girl will send the *sipatoru* to ask the husband for the bride-price, called *ba'-gyaron*,<sup>1</sup> an amount generally of 30,000 cowries (value about 30s.) and a goat.

The head of a family is the person responsible for finding and paying for a wife for younger brothers and 'sons'. In the case of a female child, whose birth has been ascribed to the influence or assistance of one or other of the spirits already mentioned, a ceremony has to be performed before such a woman can be given in marriage. This rite takes the form of an additional gift of a ewe, goat, or dog,<sup>2</sup> from the man who is marrying the girl, to her father. This animal is held above the shrine of the particular spirit which is supposed to be the girl's guardian spirit, and a piece is cut off one of its ears, to the

<sup>1</sup> Also heard, *ka'gyaren*. The sum varies, from the above sum to two cows, according to the custom of the clans. In ancient times, I am told, it was 10,000 cowries and a sheep.

<sup>2</sup> A goat in the case of a girl called *Hadema*, a sheep and dog if called *Haluri*.

accompaniment of the words: 'You *dema* (or *toy* or *daluno*, &c.) permit this woman to conceive before she has lain two months on her husband's mat.' The piece of ear is left upon the shrine, and the animal itself is then set free. Its first-born male offspring, after it has grown, is sacrificed over the shrine, the woman and her husband being invited to be present. The spirit is thanked, if the woman has by this time conceived, or if not, its attention is directed to the fact that she has not yet done so. The foreleg and neck of the sacrifice are given to the couple.

The original animal, the ear of which was cut, becomes known as *dema piebu*, *dema bon* (*dema* sheep, *dema* goat &c.) and must on no account be killed before it has had young, and not at all unless the family are in dire want.

Some of the Isala have the same custom already noted among the Dagaba and Nankanse, where the son-in-law has to repair his mother-in-law's roof.

There is an interesting custom, which has already been noted in connexion with the right claimed by a clansman of one clan settlement to seize his clanswoman *from another town*, and give her in marriage to some one. Having captured this girl, the clansman who has done so will demand 1,000 cowries from her husband before he will give her up. This payment is called *banduokia* (strength of own neck?). The bride-price will, however, I am informed, generally be paid to the girl's parents in the usual manner, not to her pseudo-captor. I am told that in many cases the capture and handing over are a staged affair resorted to in cases where the girl's parents have refused to consent to a union between their daughter and the man of her choice. The girl arranges with her 'brother' in another town to be captured by him and handed over to her lover, who will later make his peace with her parents.

*Hela*: A custom known as *hela* (lover) exists among the Isala, whereby a husband acquiesces to his wife having a lover. The latter will perform certain services for the husband, such as doing work on his house, and supplying him with beer on market-days. This *ménage de trois* is arranged, I am informed, somewhat as follows. A man clandestinely makes a lover of a fellow clansman's wife, and after some time tells the woman that he would like to let her husband know about it, and, as it were, transform what is a guilty intrigue into a licensed association between them. He therefore solicits the services of a male friend and asks him to break the news to his lover's husband. A day



is arranged when lover and husband meet, and beer is produced and consumed, at the former's expense. The subject is eventually broached, and a mutual understanding reached as to their future relations. The husband will either inform the man that his intercourse with his wife must cease, or he will agree to sharing her with him. In the event of the latter arrangement, the lover (now recognized as such) gives the husband 1,000 cowries, an arrow, a fowl, and some tobacco. 'The arrow he gives the husband is to show that his (the lover's) life lies in his hands.

*Marriages, Permitted and Forbidden:* (a) The Isala of Tumu, who are of the Crow clan, state that formerly they did not intermarry with Lobi, Dagaba, or Builsa, but did so freely with Kasena and Awuna. The fact that they did not seek wives from the three tribes named was not, I think, due to any cause other than that direct communication between them and these tribes was difficult.

(b) Marriage within the clan is forbidden; each clan is exogamous.

(c) Besides being excluded from marrying any woman of his own clan, a man may not marry any woman of his mother's clan, even when the woman lives in a town other than that from which his mother came. This rule embraces a wider circle, it will be seen, than a similar prohibition among the Nankanse which excluded only females of the mother's clan who come from her particular kindred group or section. A man may, however, marry the daughter of a clanswoman of his mother, other than a near relation, who has married into another clan.

(d) Marriage with a father's sister's daughter and with (e) mother's brother's daughter is prohibited; the speaker calls both such women *de hal* (sister).

(f) Marriage with a mother's sister's daughter and (g) own sister's child is prohibited; the former is called by the speaker 'sister', the latter 'daughter'.

(h) A man may not marry the daughter of his wife's sister 'because his wife calls that woman her daughter'.

(i) He may marry—indeed it is considered a natural union—his wife's brother's daughter, whom he calls *me hal keti*.

(j) The Isala permit a man to marry two sisters (even if *nyere*),<sup>1</sup> but 'if both conceive about the same time, the younger is sent to another compound for her confinement'.

(k) A brother and sister may not marry a sister and brother, 'it would cause quarrelling'.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 8.

(l) A man may not marry a woman, and also marry her daughter (i.e. by another man).

(m) A father gives his daughter to a man in marriage; he may not later take a wife from the section from which his son-in-law comes.

A violation of some of the above prohibitions, for example, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*, would, it is supposed, result in death. The prohibition, in the case of others, appears to have arisen from the experience gained that such unions give rise to family squabbles, the fear of which affords the necessary deterrent.

I could not discover any special term to describe blood relationship, e.g. the bond existing between mother and child (as denoted by the word *sōō* in the Moshi-speaking group) and transmitted through the female line only, although the tie is everywhere recognized and forms a barrier to marriage (see *f* and *g supra*). On the other hand, the Isala whom I interrogated denied that witchcraft was transmitted down the female line alone, and declared that a male witch inherited the taint from the paternal side and a female witch from the mother's side.<sup>1</sup>

*Funeral Customs* (funeral of a member of the Crow clan): When a man dies, the body is bathed by women with warm water. The *Tinteintina* is informed. The corpse is dressed in clothes from which the pockets have been cut out; the loin-cloth (*kpankele*) is put on inside out, and the cap slit up one side. It is then set on a mat or cow-skin, supported against a wall. His younger brother—and heir—brings a cow and addresses the corpse saying: 'Take this cow to the spirit world (*lele*) and do not come back and prevent people sleeping.' The cow is killed by having its throat cut, and the big toe of the corpse is touched with the blood. The meat is the property of the *Tinteintina*. The corpse is now brought outside and set up.<sup>2</sup> Xylophones and drums are beaten and every one mourns. An old woman sits beside the body and drives away flies with a horse-tail switch (see Fig. 138). The funeral is kept up all night and until next day, when a large drum, called *gugon*, is beaten and the sextons (*kalva*) come and remove the body—in a cow-skin—to the vault (*boa*) for burial. Sons and brothers accompany it. The grave is inside the yard of the compound. A *Tinteintina* is buried in his own room. Sons and brothers will enter the vault after the body has been placed in it. The eldest son will address the body of

<sup>1</sup> See p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> Sometimes, if the deceased were very old, a dummy is set up outside instead of the actual body.



FIG. 138. 'An old woman sits beside the body'



FIG. 139. '... sits on a mat with a basket'

his father saying: 'Father, to-day we have buried you, if you have "medicine" do not go with it, do not go with the power of your hoe, or the power of begetting children; when I cultivate, may I get grain to eat.' The circular hole leading into the vault (see Fig. 29) is then covered over. Should a man die very suddenly, or be killed by a lion, sticks are cut in the bush, care being taken that they do not touch the ground. Round these sticks the clothes of the dead man are bound, and the dummy thus made is carried on the shoulders of two men, and questioned as to the cause of death.<sup>1</sup>

The widows cook some food and place it in the sleeping hut of the deceased before burial. Widows are smeared with white clay, in a semicircle across the forehead and down the cheeks, also under the arms and down the shins. Widows become the property of the heir, but 'he may not marry them himself, they are given to his younger brothers'. They appear, however, to have some choice in the matter, although they may not return home if the *jaron* (or *gyron*) has been paid for them.

About three months after burial, the bow and quiver of the deceased are broken and cast away at the cross-roads. It is after this has been done that the widows have their heads shaved, and about a week later, when the hair has grown a little, that they are permitted to remarry.<sup>2</sup>

A man may die and be buried, but his funeral custom be delayed because of lack of provisions. In such a case, the wives of the dead man make pretence that 'their husband is only sick', and do not exhibit any of the signs of widowhood until the public funeral ceremony comes to be held.

Contributions made at a funeral (*awugiso*, lit. for burying the corpse) are of two kinds: (a) obligatory contributions from certain relations, (b) voluntary contributions from friends. The former include: (1) 500 cowries from the husband of every clanswoman who had before marriage belonged to the section of the deceased. These women are 'sisters' in the classificatory sense. (2) 500 cowries from the brothers-in-law of the deceased. (3) 1,000 cowries and a goat from each of the sons-in-law of the deceased. 'If the husbands of these women failed to give the contributions demanded by custom, their wives would be taken away from them.'

<sup>1</sup> See p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> Children born by the second husband do not, as among some tribes, belong to the ghost of the first husband.

Voluntary contributions are from friends. The spouse of the deceased sits on a mat with a basket into which the donations are placed (see Fig. 139). Any donation which fails to go into the basket and falls on the ground must be left there. In the case of a widow who sits receiving these contributions, she gives all to the brother of the deceased; in the case of a widower, he hands all over to the head of his family group. The money thus collected will be used to defray

the funeral expenses, or, if anything is left over, to buy a goat or sheep which will then become family property. Every family in the section will contribute beer for the 'strangers' who attend the funeral. All 'strangers', i.e. non-clansmen, who attend a funeral are fed by the *yobo-tina*, the one who owns, i.e. is responsible for the funeral; the family of the deceased thus often incur considerable expense.

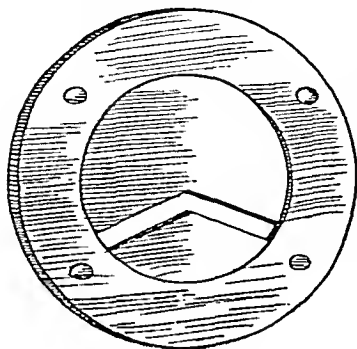


FIG. 140

During a male parent's lifetime, it is taboo for his eldest son to make use of any personal property belonging to his father, e.g. his chair, clothes, sandals, bow, or to look into the grain-store. Among some clans, before the body is buried, the son takes a cloth belonging to his father, and throws it down before the corpse three times saying: 'This, that was forbidden during your lifetime, I do now.' The body is buried in this cloth.

I was shown a flat round wooden mask and a dress made of *boo* (fibre) sewn on to a foundation of a coarse net rope; the dress consisted of trousers and a coat. The outfit, I was informed, was sometimes worn at funerals of *nehese* (elders), and is called *sigu*, the mask *sigu nyu*. I was unable to obtain further information about its significance (Fig. 140.)

The following notes, made at a funeral of an old woman who was buried on 26th August 1929, will serve to supplement the above. A dummy corpse was set up outside the compound round which the mourners danced. The reason given why the actual corpse was not brought out was, 'because it was that of an old woman which could not be set up becomingly'. The corpse itself was dressed in a man's clothes, complete with trousers, cap, and gown. The grave—a family



FIG. 141. 'The body was brought out and placed leaning against the wall'



FIG. 142. The shrine of Wei or Wea at Tumu

vault—was inside the yard of the compound and was opened just before the interment took place by removing a large round stone which closed the bottle-neck entrance. While the sextons (*kalva*) were opening the grave, the body was brought out of the hut and placed leaning against the wall (see Fig. 141). The two sextons who removed the stone from the mouth of the grave, before doing so, but after removing the earth which covered the stone, took some ashes which they sprinkled saying: 'So-and-so, permit a hole, that they may bury the body' (*Nyanwe tea boa de ba wugi so*). The person thus addressed 'was the first person buried in that vault'. The sextons then took hold of the stone and lifted it up a few inches, waving it three times from left to right and saying: 'They who open this hole, if there is a God, do not let them have to open it again to-morrow' (*Ba se suru boa ren, de W'ea hereme de ba kyie se boro suru*). On finally replacing the stone, they moved it three times in the opposite direction.

While the sextons were working at the opening up of the grave, a woman who was the first-born of a co-wife of the deceased (who had not any children of her own alive) was led forward by another woman who covered the eyes of the girl she was leading with her other hand. The blindfolded girl carried a small branch with a few leaves upon it. She was led up to the feet of the corpse, where she cast down the branch saying: 'My mother, during your life I might not throw down a leaf in front of you; to-day you are dead, and I cast a leaf at you; a thing which formerly I must not do, to-day I do it.' She was then led away and had a little hair cut from her right temple.<sup>1</sup>

One of the sextons who had entered the grave, received the corpse which was handed down feet first. Various persons now let themselves down into the grave, which was a large low circular vault, containing, as far as I could see in the dim light, bodies in all stages of decomposition. The first person to enter the grave was a young boy who was said to suffer from a delicate stomach and used to vomit after partaking of food. To enter burial vaults is the recognized cure for this ailment. A brother of the dead woman next entered the grave to see if the sextons had performed their duties in a proper manner.<sup>2</sup> This man spoke in a low voice to the corpse saying: 'Do not come back to your husband's people, when you come back, come to us.'

<sup>1</sup> A few days later her head was shaved entirely. Compare this rite with that of a male throwing clothes before his father's corpse.

<sup>2</sup> A sexton may bury a body with an arm or leg bent beneath it, which will cause it to be born deformed if it 'comes back'.

A son by a co-wife was the next to enter the grave, he addressed the body saying: 'We have paid for you, you must not come back anywhere but to your husband's town.'

The stone over the mouth of the grave was now replaced; a clansman from the dead woman's town threw three handfuls of earth on the stone saying: 'I too am burying you'. The relations of the dead woman were given 700 cowries, a goat, two fowls, a small basket of corn, and some tobacco. Had the bride-price not been paid, this, I was informed, would now have been demanded. The goat given to her clansmen would, I was told, be sacrificed on their ancestral shrines (*lelea*), but otherwise no special funeral custom would be performed by them for their kinswoman.<sup>1</sup>

At other funerals which I have attended, when the deceased was a female, women have circled carrying firewood, 'for the deceased to take to *lel* (the spirit world)' (see Fig. 100). Isala women keep time to the songs they sing at funerals by slapping the thigh with the right hand, holding the left tightly over the vagina as they do so. I noticed that even those who wore leaves did so, but assumed the pose was adopted for reasons of modesty. I was informed, however, that they did so because of the different sound thereby obtained when slapping the thigh.

Among the Isala, when a man dies, his son does not take charge of his father's spirit, the heir, who is the brother, does so. This is a very important distinction. Even when a 'son' eventually succeeds, he may be the son of a brother and not the actual son of the deceased.

<sup>1</sup> Isala women have small pots called *gene*, in which they keep the odds and ends which form a woman's possessions—beads, bangles, &c. On death, the eldest son will call the eldest daughter to come and uncover the pot, and take out its contents which are shared between them, the brother giving his share to his wife. The daughter inherits the pot. Compare the *kumpio* among the Nankanse.





FIG. 143. 'Dimoa now advanced to the circular mound'



FIG. 144. 'Pouring out the water over the shrine'

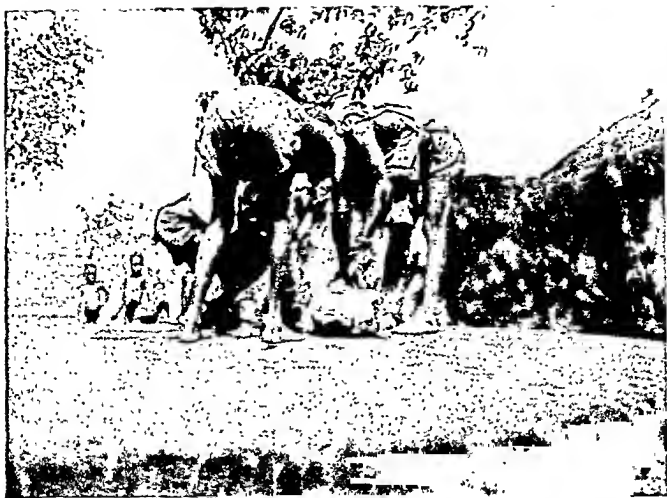


FIG. 145. The sheep being sacrificed on top of the shrine



FIG. 146. 'Batine then poured out the water'

THE ISALA (*continued*)*Isala Gods and Shrines, and a Ceremony in Connexion with them*

THE Sky-God and the Earth Goddess are here, as we have found them elsewhere, symbolized as husband and wife (*W'ea ar o bala Tiutei*). Emanations of the former, under the name of *den' W'ea* (lit. soul or spirit of *W'ea*), the shrines for which are stones set in a clay mound, are everywhere to be found on the flat roofs. These shrines seem to be similar to the *T'ini* shrines already noted among other tribes.<sup>1</sup> The Isala recognize and propitiate their own volatile souls during life. This soul is called *dema* (*sia* in Nankane). It appears to be very similar in conception to the *kra* in Ashanti. A man makes a little mud shrine<sup>2</sup> to his *dema* and sacrifices upon this. *Demse* (pl.) become *lelea* (s. *lele*) after death. The owner of a *dema* shrine keeps it in his room. When he dies, after an interval of about a year, his relatives remove it and place it outside<sup>3</sup> along with the *demse* of other ancestors. A man will sacrifice to his *dema*, calling upon his father (if dead), the Sky-God, and the Earth Goddess to allow him to prosper. A woman also may have a shrine for her *dema* 'if advised by a soothsayer to make a shrine for it'. 'A woman's *dema* shrine is not, however, placed among the ancestral *lelea* after her death, it will generally be thrown away; her spirit then will follow her husbands', i.e. share in offerings given to the latter. 'If she had a number of sons, however, the *dema* (shrine) may be left lying where it was kept during her lifetime, i.e. in her hut near the place where she kept her pots.' A male's *dema* is usually placed during his lifetime where he hangs his bows and quiver.

The Isala think that a person's soul (*dema*) may enter a new-born child, even when the person is still alive. 'The individual whose soul does so will however, die soon after.' The infant in such a case is named *Dema* or *Hadema* (see p. 499).

When a man contemplates leaving his home for good, he will remove the small stone inside his *dema* shrine and take it with him.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXVII.

<sup>2</sup> Again usually containing a stone; the size and appearance of these shrines resemble a child's mud pies.

<sup>3</sup> Among other clans *lelea* are kept inside a room.

In addition to these *demse*, *We demse*, and *lelea* shrines, we find in many settlements a large flat circular shrine (built to contain a small stone) which is called simply *We* or *Wea* (the Sky-God). It is the shrine, not of an individual or even of a family group, but of the kindred group or even the whole clan. 'The earth mound is only to hold the stone which is the real thing—the truth.' Health, children, and good crops are asked of it. Every *We* shrine appears to be specially the God of those who hunt with bows and arrows, and receives offerings of game so killed which are laid upon it.

The *We* (or *Wea* as the word is pronounced in some Isala dialects) at Tumu may be seen in Figs. 142-45. It was in connexion with it and other associated shrines that the ceremony to be described presently took place.

*Vene*<sup>1</sup> (from which is derived the word *Vene-tina*) appears to be the equivalent of the word *tingane* (sacred grove) in other languages. It is here, as elsewhere, sometimes difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain with certainty what was the original nature of the spirit or spirits which are supposed to frequent certain shrines. Ancestral spirits seem to become confused with other spirits, which these ancestors had once themselves worshipped, and *vice versa*. The best thing to do in all such cases is to attend the rites in connexion with these gods. It may then become possible by listening to the words spoken during the ceremony to form some conclusion as to the nature of the powers whose aid is being solicited. The following is a description of a series of sacrifices, made upon various shrines, which was attended on December 12, 1929, at the clan settlement of the Crows. The ceremony, I was informed, was an unusual one, but in this case it took the special form of a thanksgiving for the immunity which the crops of the clan had enjoyed from the locust swarms which in 1929 appear to have swept over a large part of the African continent.

When the news of the approach of the locusts in the vicinity had first reached Tumu, Dimoa, the *Tinteintina*, and all the Elders had met and made vows to give offerings to the gods if these pests should spare their crops, which had not been all gathered in. The aid of all the local spirits had been invoked, and 'women who were witches had also been invited to help'.

I had been absent during these preliminaries, but was informed on my return that each shrine (grove ?) had been visited on that occasion,

<sup>1</sup> Besides these categories of gods, the Isala have *daluri* or *daluno* (fetish), and the *toy*, which has already been investigated.



FIG. 147. The scene at the sacrifice to Tumu We'haiya



FIG. 148. Telewei Vene



FIG. 149. Braima, an Isala of the Crow clan

ashes sprinkled, the spirits asked for assistance, and promised that if all went well 'the ashes would be removed later with a cow or sheep'. The ceremony now described was the occasion of the fulfilment of these vows.

The opening ceremony took place just outside the Chief's compound, before a shrine known as Wei (or Wea, or We, see Fig. 143). The earthwork of this shrine had the day previously been replastered and beaten hard by 'the daughters of the Crow clan', who used flat wooden mallets for the purpose. By nine o'clock, the *Tinteintina* and Elders had assembled. Various persons had brought white fowls. A cow was led up, thrown down, and had its legs tied, ready to be sacrificed when the time came, along with several sheep.

The proceedings began by the secular Chief, Kanton II, making a short speech, the gist of which was somewhat as follows. Addressing Dimoa and the Elders, he reminded them that they had served his ancestors who had been *Tinteintama*. A compound, he said, if divided, would allow trouble to enter. He said he had given two cows for offerings. If he or Dimoa went to rest with bad thoughts about any of their subjects in their heads, then might they die, and if any of their subjects thought evil of them, might they too die. The people must obey him and Dimoa.<sup>1</sup>

Dimoa next spoke, asking if all had heard what the Chief had said. An Elder replied that they had, and said that they all knew if there was a big tree standing alone, no one feared to go there, but that if there were many lesser trees growing round it, these made a thicket, which people feared.

The Chief now went off and took no further part in the day's proceedings. Dimoa now advanced to the circular mound (see Fig. 143) and taking a calabash of water in his hand rinsed out his mouth three times, then standing up, spoke as follows: 'Sky-God and his wife the Earth, let them come and receive water and call the ancestor of Tumu. Let him call the rivers and the bush and all the gods to come and receive water, and give to Wei. We met here and cried out that an evil thing is coming; that the locusts are coming to destroy our corn. They came and did no harm. We promised you a cow. Help women to bear children and young people to steal (*ga*) wives. Let them eat the newly husked corn in health. May the young men help each other.

<sup>1</sup> It was most noticeable how the Chief coupled Dimoa with himself, yet the latter has not any official status in the Administration and under a secular ruler who did not happen to be his kinsman would be completely ignored.

If a man whose eyes can see,<sup>1</sup> go and get a bad thing, may Wei kill him. If the winds bring any sickness, may Wei guard us against it. May the corn which we cut increase when we thresh it.'

While he was speaking thus, he was punctuating each sentence by pouring out the water over the shrine (see Fig. 144). An Elder, called Bakyare, of Bendema section, now mounted the platform formed by the shrine, cut the throat of a white fowl, and cast it down.<sup>2</sup> While this was going on, a small hole was being dug near where the cow lay, in which, when finished, ashes were sprinkled 'to prevent the earth from mixing in the blood', which was about to be poured into the hole. The cow's tail was next dipped in a calabash of water which was then sprinkled over the shrine.

A sheep was now carried up on top of the shrine and killed there by having its throat cut, the blood being allowed to fall on the mound (see Fig. 145). This sheep was killed by one, Yerebuo, a son of Bakyare.

The cow was next killed, also by Yerebuo, and the blood allowed to flow into the hole prepared for it. Some of the blood was also taken in a calabash and poured over the mound. Most of those present now set off—leaving a few men cutting up the cow and sheep—for the section known as Tworo. The *vene* here consisted of a heap of stones upon which lay a wooden club (*tangul*). This shrine lay quite in the open. 'It is the chief god of the Crow clan since the time of Kusun', and is called Tiero, but is more often referred to as Tumu We'haiya.<sup>3</sup> A stone was picked up from the pile, and also the club, and these were placed on the ground in the shade of a neighbouring tree. A cow had already been brought and was lying on the ground. The tail of this was dipped in a calabash of water and the *Venetina*, Batine by name, filled his mouth and then blew the water out three times, while another man picked up the club and knocked the ground three times saying: 'Tumu We'haiya, if you have gone elsewhere, come hither; if you are asleep, wake up, and sit up.'

Batine then poured out the water (see Fig. 146) saying: 'Wea and his wife the Earth, let them awake and accept the water; when they have accepted water, let them call Kusun<sup>4</sup> to come and accept water

<sup>1</sup> i.e. has some supernatural powers, see also p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> Among the Isala, it is not necessary for a fowl to settle on its back to show acceptance by the spirit to whom it is offered.

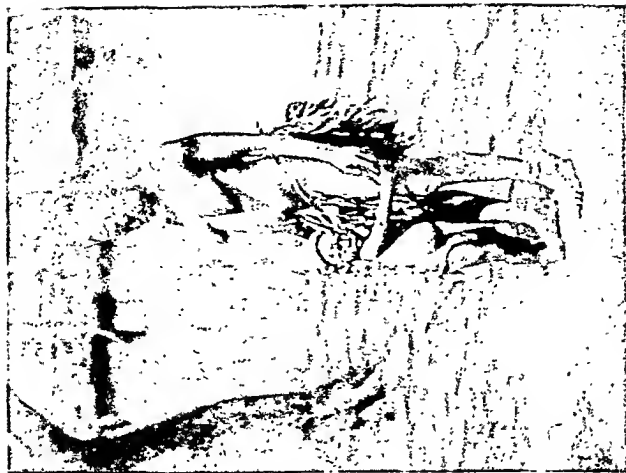
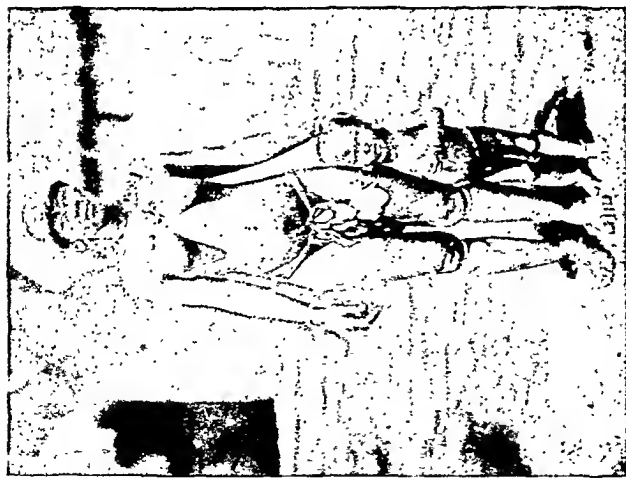
<sup>3</sup> *Tiero* means literally, 'a lump of clay used for building a house'; *We'baiya* means literally, 'heat of the sun'.

<sup>4</sup> The first ancestor.





Figs. 150-1. The wife of Salafu, the hunter



Figs. 152-3. Isala woman and child

and give it to We'haiya. When the locusts came, all the Elders rose up and met together and made a vow to We'haiya, (saying) that if it had power it would prevent the locusts from eating the corn, and that if they did not eat the corn they would give a cow. This cow they have brought; let him rise up, receive, and guard the whole town, and look after women that they may bear children. If there is any man who is a bad man and wants the town to fall, kill that one; if there is any woman who wants the town to fall may the *vene* take this club and hit her head and break it.'

A fowl was next sacrificed. The words spoken were: 'May Wea and his wife the Earth receive this fowl.' The cow was next killed, first being tapped three times on the head with the club (which may be seen in Fig. 146). This was then rammed down its throat which was then cut.<sup>1</sup> The blood was caught in the large pot seen in Fig. 147, and a calabash full was poured over the stone by the *Vene-tina* who said as he did so: 'Tumu We'haiya receive the blood of your cow.' The rope, which had been used to tie up the animal, was cut in small pieces and placed on top of the stone. This was done in case 'the spirit wished to bind any one'.

Again, the party of Elders passed on to the next grove, a *vene* called Telewie. Telewie in Isalen means a baobab tree; 'one had formerly stood at this spot, which had protected the town'. God and the Earth were called upon; Telewie was asked (by Dimoa) for the usual blessing on crops and children and wives for the young men. A fowl and a goat had their throats cut over the few stones that seemed to constitute the shrine (see Fig. 148).

A sacrifice made to Telewie may not be skinned or cut up before being cooked; it must be roasted whole over a fire.

Offerings were also made at a *vene* called Bobine (a rock, I was informed), but I did not attend the ceremony.

After these public sacrifices, every-one in the town gave offerings to their more intimate spirits; heads of compounds to the family spirits, to ancestral and family acquired *toma* and to family fetishes (*daluno*). Individuals sacrificed to their *demse* (souls) and to their private 'medicines' or fetishes, the 'roots' of all of which were renovated.

<sup>1</sup> A younger brother of the *Vene-tina* performed this operation.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER LV

*Tattooing among Isala:* The Captains of Kazari and Babatu used to mark their prisoners with their particular marks to distinguish them from the captives of other leaders. In this manner tribal marks came to have little significance in these parts. The following notes, however, may be of some interest. The *Gangavera* (Crow clan) state that they were always distinguished by their entire absence of any tattooing. The Crocodile clan (the *Bojan* branch), on the other hand, are said to be distinguished by two lines from the corners of the mouth and two from the nose across the cheeks.

The *Hen'vera*, it is said, were originally distinguished by a mark from the forehead down the bridge of the nose, 'but now generally have two lines running from the corners of the mouth'.

'In ancient times, the men used to wear ear-rings' (compare the Lobi at the present day). The women of the Crow clan (and possibly others) pierce the upper lip and lobes of the ears, inserting straws or polished pebbles (see Figs. 46-7). Figs. 149-53 show some Isala types.

*Small-pox Inoculation:* The Isala, like most of the tribes in the Northern Territories, state that they had long practised inoculation for small-pox, the Elders insisting on compulsory vaccination. The pus was taken direct from some one suffering from the disease. 'Bad people die of small-pox,' said Aboya.

*Ceremonial Cannibalism:* Some of the Isala clans (like the Builsa) used to eat the heart of a brave enemy.

## THE TAMPOLENSE AND VAGALA

*Traditional History. Connexion with Certain of the Isala Clans. Clan Organization. Inheritance. Funeral Customs*

THERE seems little doubt that the Tampolense, Vagala, and certain of the clans which are now grouped under the name of Isala, were all originally of one stock. The linguistic evidence in support of this statement has already been given.<sup>1</sup> Historical evidence, which seems to justify a similar conclusion, may be obtained by a comparison of the traditions of migrations current among these three, now widely scattered, groups.

*Isala Traditions:* The Elders of the Crow clan, it will be recollected, stated: 'We have been told that our ancestors came from Kaha. We left Kaha because of a quarrel arising out of the sacrifice of a dog.' Again, the Crown-bird clan stated: 'The *Ganvera* (Crown-bird clan) came from Bole. Our ancestors . . . were hunters. They quarrelled over the sacrifice of a dog.'

Let us compare the above with the following traditional histories of the Tampolense and Vagala.

*Tampolense Traditions:* A group of people bearing this name were discovered living south of Gambaga among the so-called Mampruse, with whom they had apparently always been classed. They had maintained their distinctive language and their original social organization in a very remarkable degree. Their traditional history is as follows: 'We have heard that we and the Isala had a common ancestress and that we quarrelled about a dog which was being sacrificed. The group, which later became Isala, claimed the head of the dog, as they said they were senior, but our group would not agree. We fought together and all scattered. Some went to Wale Wale, Tampolono; others settled at Mankarago;<sup>2</sup> others at Yagom. We, here at Langwinse,<sup>3</sup> originally came from Wale Wale to Tanbwinie, whence were

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix to Chapter III. 'Tampolense' is sometimes heard 'Tampolonse'.

<sup>2</sup> The Chief of Tumu (Isala) told me that about two years ago, the Chief of this place had visited him at Tumu, claiming kinship. The reference to an ancestress, not an ancestor, is significant.

<sup>3</sup> Generally called by Europeans 'Kambonaba'.

founded the Tampolense settlements of Boyene, Singbini, Kanwabere, Zangua, Pinaba, and Langwinse.<sup>1</sup>

*Vagala Traditions:* The Vagala,<sup>1</sup> like the Tampolense, are a tribe whose name has remained more or less unknown to Europeans. They had apparently been grouped under the name of Gonja, from whom, however, they are quite distinct in both language and origin. This tribe now occupies the area shown on the map. The members of it with whom I resided and whose customs I investigated, were those living in the vicinity of Bole, from where, it will be recollected, the Crown-bird clan of the present-day Isala state that their ancestors had hailed.

The Vagala tradition states: 'We were formerly Gurense and fought about a dog. A sacrifice was being made, and the dog's head was on the shrine, but when it came to the eating of it, we could not agree. We quarrelled and scattered. The place where this happened was towards the north, and was called Kaha. We came to Belze<sup>2</sup> and thence to Jan, Suma, Jandara, and Gyintilipe. When we first settled here, the Gonja had not yet arrived. They came later from Mande, under their Chief Jakpa. We are the same people as the Isala and the Tampolense. A Vagala hunter from Sakpa was the first to report the arrival of the Gonja. He saw their horse-boys cutting grass, and noticed that they had not any foreskins, and he wondered what sort of people they could be. He returned home and reported what he had seen to the Elders. They put grain in their bags and set off to see who the strangers were. The place where our ancestors first met the Gonja was Tumfugo. The Vagala from Wulase also went to meet the invaders, taking millet. We were afraid of them because they were warriors. Fighting between the Vagala and Gonja began near Bole because a Vagala man, called Banwara, would not agree to the Gonja coming to Bole. The Gonja conquered us.'

This tradition is of interest and considerable local historical value. Besides affording valuable evidence of a common origin for Tampolense, Vagala, and some of the Isala clans, it helps us to place in their proper perspective the relative importance of two groups, one of which is at the present day tending almost to obscure the very existence of the other. The Gonja, whose name has been given to the whole of the people in this area, were not the earliest inhabitants, but were originally marauding bands who settled in the country and

<sup>1</sup> Singular, Vagalo; the language, Vagele.

<sup>2</sup> Belze or Bel is, I believe, another name for Bole.

became the ruling class over the mass of the people who were the Vagala.<sup>1</sup>

The social and clan organization of these tribes, i.e. the Tampolense and Vagala, is very similar. Clan descent is patrilineal, and inheritance is through the sister's son. In this respect it will be observed that they resemble the Lobi group.<sup>2</sup>

*The Tampolense:* The settlements of the Tampolense at Langwinse,<sup>3</sup> which was the only one of the tribe's townships which I was able to visit, presented some unusual and extremely interesting features connected with its clan organization and rules of inheritance. The entire settlement consisted, as far as I could discover, of two endogamous groups. One, which I shall call A, had as its avoidances, Leopard and Red-pigeon (*Kye*<sup>4</sup> and *Koshema*), the other, B, had Horse and Snake (*Zaga* and *Dom*) as its taboos. (Which of the two taboos in each group was the primary one, I omitted to ask.) Each group was exogamous; members of one group might only marry into the other. The Elders, in fact, stated emphatically that their daughters and sisters were not allowed to marry outside the settlement. I unfortunately omitted to inquire if a similar restriction was imposed on the males of the two groups. Here, therefore, we would appear to have a miniature dual organization. The Elders explained the existence of these two groups by stating that an ancestor had two 'children', a male and a female. The ancestor's—and hence the 'son's'—avoidances were those of A group; the woman had married a man whose avoidances were those of B group, which thus became those of her descendants.<sup>5</sup>

As has been already noted, 'clan descent' is acquired through the male, but inheritance of property depends upon kinship ties which are traced through the female line alone. The heir to family property is: (a) firstly, 'brother' or 'half-brother', and when all 'brothers' are exhausted, (b) sister's son.

This, though curious and unusual in itself (as we are accustomed to associate the clan with the question of inheritance, and to consider clan

<sup>1</sup> There are also some other tribes which are not dealt with in these volumes, e.g. the Mo and Pantera, which also inhabit this area.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XLVI.

<sup>3</sup> Langwinse is called Kambonaba by Europeans. It is a few miles south of Gambaga.

<sup>4</sup> Some of the Elders called this clan *Poporega*, but this I found only meant the 'spotted one'.

<sup>5</sup> Compare the groups 'mother's children' and 'father's children' among the Vagala, see p. 520.

and blood as more or less synonymous terms), is also what we have already found among the Lobi. The Tampolense rules of inheritance, however, present some other still more novel features.

We have already seen elsewhere how, where inheritance is on a patrilineal basis, all the sons of a group of brothers or half-brothers<sup>1</sup> are equally 'sons' of any one of these brothers, and how a son of a brother who is senior to a man's own son may exclude the latter as heir to his own father. On this analogy it might be expected that, where inheritance is on a matrilineal basis, depending on some tie transmitted through the female line alone, we might find the heir chosen from among any of a group of 'brothers'<sup>2</sup> whose mothers were sisters.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, when the Tampolense refer to a 'brother' succeeding to a 'brother's' property, this relation does not necessarily mean the uterine brother of the deceased. 'Brother' may here be the son of a maternal aunt whom the deceased called 'mother's child' or 'brother', whose mother was senior to the deceased's own mother. We must not lose sight of the fact that under the conditions existing in this settlement, all these 'brothers' would be living together in the same place.

Leaving the Tampolense for a moment, and turning to an examination of the rules of inheritance found among the Vagala, who, as we have seen, are the same stock as the Tampolense, the following was the information obtained. 'The son of my mother's sister, whom I call *ma bie* (mother's child), should succeed to my property before my own brother (uterine), even if my own brother is older than he.<sup>3</sup> If he were not allowed to do so, he would be crying out for the dead to hear: "Am I not then your own brother?" The dead would then strike the man who had taken the property.' 'But,' continued the informant, 'as my *ma bie* will be in another town, he will leave some of the property in charge of my own brother, just as when a sister's son succeeds to property, he will leave some to the deceased's own son, because of fear that the dead would club a greedy heir, as we club sacrifices at a funeral.'

We have, I think, in the laws of inheritance of these two tribes, an instructive insight into the possible stages in the evolution of the laws

<sup>1</sup> By the same father.

<sup>2</sup> Or half-brothers, or half-sisters, i.e. with the same mother. This is the case among the Lobi.

<sup>3</sup> I am presuming that my informant infers that in this case his mother's sister was senior to his own mother.



governing the inheritance of property. The conditions at Langwinse, among the Tampolense, represent perhaps the earlier stage. The solidarity of the kindred group is the main object of attainment.<sup>1</sup> This is fostered by the rules of inheritance. These, however, become irksome and difficult once the conditions under which they originally functioned have altered. Among the Vagala, 'brothers' in this sense may now live in towns widely apart, instead of all being next-door neighbours. We find, therefore, that the old customs are visibly weakening under these new conditions. Here 'brother' in the classificatory sense is already beginning to stand, or be pushed, aside in favour of the real brother,<sup>2</sup> and the son is also beginning to assert his rights over the sister's son. The influences at work in both cases are similar to those which we have seen in operation in Ashanti, where the rights of father and of maternal uncle clash, and where spiritual influences throw their weight on the side of the former. It is but a step from what is described above, before the heir becomes, (1) the full brother, and (2) the son, which is, in these parts, almost everywhere the rule of succession. The next stage will be for son to oust the brother.

It should be noted, that here again among the Vagala and Tampolense, as we have already seen among the Lobi, clan inheritance, which is strictly patrilineal, has not any influence on the laws of inheritance, which are based on a matrilineal system. 'Blood' and not clan is here the determinative factor in deciding the inheritance of property.

The Tampolense at Langwinse marry cross-cousins. 'I have the right to marry my father's sister's daughter, and may marry my mother's brother's daughter.'

'A *nera* (maternal uncle) had the right to sell or pawn his nephew; a son becomes the property of his father only when the latter paid a debt for his son's uncle, which the uncle could not repay.' A father is, however, responsible for finding a wife for his son.

The system of local government among the Tampolense was similar to that found among the Isala. The head of the settlement was called *Tohatina* or *Tienetina*, and he was assisted by Elders (*Nihie*, pl. *Nihieta*). A rich man was called *Kora*; the head of a compound is *Damtina*. The Mampruse have now appointed a *Kambonaba*<sup>3</sup> over the settlement,

<sup>1</sup> Property, in the sense of wealth, was unknown; see also p. 521.

<sup>2</sup> When inheritance is traced through the male the same difficulty does not arise, as a group of 'brothers' would always be in one township.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 259.

and the tendency here, as elsewhere, is for this official to ignore the old traditional rulers, and centre all authority in himself and his relations.

The following is a brief account of the funeral custom for an Elder among the Tampolense. A dying man is not allowed to breathe his last unattended; he will be supported by a wife, sister, or daughter. An exception to this rule is in the case of murderers or of men who have killed an enemy in war. They may only be ministered to at the last by some one who has also killed a man. Father's relations, mother's relations, and the brother, who is in charge of the funeral (*lutina*), each bring a white cloth from which all the pockets will be cut out and coloured threads (if any) removed before burial. Sextons, called *pelsa* (s. *pela*), bury the body. The 'Owner of the Land's' permission has to be obtained before a burial. The ground is knocked three times before commencing to dig the grave, which is made inside the compound. Apparently only one person is buried in one grave. The form of the grave, as far as I could gather (I have not actually seen one), is an oblong-shaped recess which is made after digging down for some distance. This niche, in which the corpse is laid, is finally shut off and the rest filled in.

Before burial, a corpse is 'swept' to remove the power of any 'medicines' which it had possessed: 'Father, the "medicine" which is in your body, I wish to take out, and when some one touches you, may he not be sick.' The person who says so kills a small chicken by knocking its head. This fowl is not eaten.<sup>1</sup>

'A young person is buried in the farm in front of the compound.' Tampolense compounds have conical grass roofs, although they state that formerly they built flat-roofed houses.

*The Vagala*: The Vagala tradition linking the tribe with the Tampolense has already been given, and also a note on their system of inheritance. The Vagala appear to be divided into two endogamous groups, which they call *Han-bie* and *Bal-bie*, literally 'mothers' children' and 'fathers' children'. The avoidances of these groups are respectively *Zaga* and *Dom*, and *Lol* and *Koemu* (Horse and Snake, and Leopard and Red-pigeon).<sup>2</sup> This, it will be noted, is exactly the clan organization found at Lambusie among the Tampolense. Each group is exogamous. A curious and interesting custom exists, whereby a man's eldest male child and one female child are claimed by his wife's

<sup>1</sup> Compare p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> *Han-bie* group also have a third avoidance of *Muntolle* (a mole? or mouse?).

father and go to live with him. This custom is called *galeo* (going and taking).

'I have a daughter who marries and bears children. I will claim my daughter's eldest son and a daughter, who will leave their parents and come to live with me. The girl I will give to my wife to help with the housework; the boy will work on my farm.'

This adopted son would one day be the heir to the property of the speaker's own son, but when I suggested that the adoption was carried out with this end in view, my informant asked, 'What property? Before Europeans came, if I had a rag, I would be a rich man,' and gave as the reason for the custom, the fact that there was no bride-price paid for wives, and that sons-in-law do not work for mothers-in-law.

'All I receive for a daughter is the millet which her future husband will bring when she is still a child. When she reaches puberty, these gifts cease.' These *mi-gbine* (millet baskets) are all that is necessary to constitute a legal marriage, and with 20 cowries which a man may give a girl when courting her and 100 cowries when he marries, are all the expenses incurred.

This interesting custom and explanation go far to prove what the student of the marriage customs described in these volumes must have suspected to be the case, i.e. that the larger payments, demanded quite apart from the preliminary, generally small expenses,<sup>1</sup> were in the nature of payments by the husband's group for the children. The stealing of an infant among the Isala and Dagaba would appear to be a survival of the custom just described.

The Vagala state that it is not forbidden to marry cross-cousins but that there is a reluctance to do so, as they have found that such unions result in quarrelling. 'We formerly did so, but when a man quarrelled with his wife,<sup>2</sup> the mother took her daughter's part; the husband's father took his son's part, and meanwhile the spirit of the grandfather of both became angry and killed some one.'

The position of widows regarding remarriage is unusual, but in keeping with the fact that bride-price was not paid for them on marriage. The heir may not take them<sup>3</sup> and they are free to go where they want and marry whom they will, once the funeral custom is over. Widows who are old and have ceased to bear children, remain in their

<sup>1</sup> Which make the marriage legal.

<sup>2</sup> Who was his father's sister's daughter.

<sup>3</sup> A son may not on any account marry his father's widows.

husband's home and are looked after by the sons and brothers of their late husband. Should the heir to a man's property marry a widow, he may not then touch any of the deceased's property. We have found a somewhat similar idea among the Nankanse, where a man who marries the widow of a relative may not sacrifice to that man.

Among the Vagala, the heir takes the spirit, not the son (compare a similar custom among the Isala), but when the heir is the sister's son, he will not take the spirit away to his compound, but will come to that of the son to propitiate it. Again we have an example of what looks like the transition stage, before the son finally acquires his own father's spirit to the entire exclusion of any one else, even of the heir.

The Head of a Vagala settlement was the *Heohen* (a word, I think, borrowed from the Gonja). 'He was senior to the *Koru* (Chief). The Gonja Chiefs were afraid of the *Heohen*, because they knew that the land belonged to them and that they had power to do them harm. When a Gonja Chief, other than the Chief of Yagbom, came before a *Heohen*, he took off his hat, sat down, lay on his left side, bent his left leg inwards, and clasped his hands over his left knee. The *Heohen* can call upon the dead and summon lions.'

*Vagala Funeral Custom:* The corpse is held on a stool (*kara*) and bathed. The 'mother's children' bring a white cloth and the 'father's children' another. The former cloth is made into a gown and cap, and the latter into a loin-cloth. The wives and son sit beside the body and move the limbs of the corpse to keep them from stiffening. Meanwhile, the *pela* (sextons) are digging the grave in the room where the deceased slept during his lifetime. The grave is oblong, with a recess which is shut off after the body has been placed inside, the rest of the pit being then filled in. Males are laid facing east; females, west. Just before burial, which takes place without delay, the corpse is bathed a second time. The corpse is not buried in the clothes supplied by the 'mother's children' which are removed, washed, and used for another occasion; the cloth supplied by the 'father's children' is kept on, and in this the body is buried.

Among the Vagala, almost every one<sup>1</sup> appears to be buried beneath the floors of ordinary dwelling- and sleeping-rooms. A township thus becomes one large mausoleum.

'If a man possessed powerful medicine, it is necessary to sweep (*piza*)

<sup>1</sup> But when a child dies who has not a *ndawe* (*nyere* in other dialects q.v.) it is buried outside the compound at the foot of some rain gutter and no funeral custom is held.

the body after death or any one touching it would die. A father will have instructed a "son" to do so, while he was still alive. A "father's son", not a "mother's son", will take this medicine.'

The eldest son kills a fowl by knocking it against the ground; the fowl is cooked along with the beans (*sega*), and just before the body is put in the grave, a portion of each is taken and offered to the corpse with the words: 'Take this and give to our grandfathers, that they may give you water to drink.' The remainder of the food is partaken of by the Elders present and the sextons.

Apart from the actual interment<sup>1</sup> there is only one funeral custom. This is called *le*, and at it, sheep, goats, and fowls are killed by clubbing them or beating their heads on the ground. The *le* funeral requires plenty of meat and grain; it may be held at once, or delayed, if these provisions are not available. Hunters will also go and kill game. 'Father's children' will buy a sheep and a hen; 'mother's children' do not buy any animals, but will help with corn, and if any are hunters, they will bring some game, which they have killed. When all is ready, the offerings are killed with a club. The flesh of the sheep and fowl is cooked and divided into seven portions. The spirits are the first to eat; no one begins for a short time after all is ready, while the spirits are eating. Seven Elders now come forward and take a portion in their hand, eat a mouthful, and then retire with the rest among the on-lookers, sharing with any one. If any man eats any portion of this food who has ever committed adultery with any of the wives of the deceased, he will die. Beer and the antelope flesh and the grain food are shared among those who attend the ceremony which may last for some weeks. The heir cannot claim the property until after this custom has been held. The widows may only remarry a year after the *le* custom. If they are unfaithful during this period, 'the late husband will club them as we clubbed the sheep. We do not hold another funeral custom after a year like the Gonja'.

*Incision:* The Vagala perform this operation on females a few days after birth.

*Compounds:* The Vagala compounds are built on the same plan as those of the Isala.

*Tattooing:* The Vagala, like the Isala of Tumu, do not tattoo. The Tampolense and Vagala were visited when the time at my disposal was getting so short that my intention was to do little else than verify

<sup>1</sup> There seems to be no special name for this; they just say *kuru na sewe* (this man is dead.)

or otherwise the rumour current concerning the relationship between these two groups and between them and the Isala. This I was able to accomplish. I had to leave them, however, without making nearly as full an investigation into their particular culture as these very interesting and little known people seem to merit. I would, therefore, specially draw the attention of any anthropologist, who may visit the Northern Territories, to these two tribes.

## THE AWUNA

*History, Clan Organization, and some Notes on Marriage and Funeral Customs*

THE tribe commonly known as Awuna, or 'Awuna Grunshi', appears to be only that branch of the Kasena whose habit of prefacing an observation with the words *A won a* ('I say') has earned for them this nickname.<sup>1</sup> In British Territory, they are found to the west of the Kasen'-speaking tribes proper and sandwiched in between them and the Isala. Their language has been investigated in the previous volume. The so-called Awuna are here composed of two groups who call themselves Fëra and Nagwa respectively.

The Fëra occupy the settlements of Pina, Pean (Fr.), Preta (Fr.), Tamvele, Konzeau (Fr.), Tasia (Fr.), Kunu (Fr.), Tanla, Netolo, Navaro (west of Pina), and Kasana. These settlements are said to be descended from a common ancestor called Fero (hence the name Fëra).

The Elders of Pina gave me the following account of their migrations before finally settling in British Territory. 'We came from the north-east, from a place called Pino, now in French Territory, after which this town (Pina) is called. Our ancestor's avoidance was *Kampoa* fruit. We also avoid *Nankangweo* (an unfired pot) and *Tigayie* (salt which has been spilled on the ground). We are the same as the Kasena; our language is the same and our customs are the same. An ancestor called Kudunyela, was one day lost and dying of thirst, when he found water inside the fruit of the *Kampoa* (Isalen, *Kampoe*). He thereupon swore that none of his descendants should ever eat it again. The wife of Kudunyela was one day moulding new pots. She had made two, but not yet fired them, when some one brought her food which she placed in a plate inside one of the unbaked pots. She died shortly afterwards. The origin of the fallen salt taboo, we do not know.'

'Kudunyela left Pino, and travelled to Nachiyugu, Kunu, and Pean, where he remained a short time and where some of his people stayed behind. From Pean he went to Tanla and thence to Pina, where he finally settled. Here his wife bore him a son called Babea.' (The

<sup>1</sup> Compare Isala; see p. 466.

Elders then gave me the names of three *Tegatu* (Priest-Kings), who had held office since their ancestors came to Pina, stating that in the time of the third of these, one Bafo, Europeans first came.) This tradition shows that the Fëra have not been settled in this locality for any great length of time.

The present constitution of the town of Pina consists of a Government Chief and a *Tegatu*.<sup>1</sup> The latter is, however, of no account. He was a pitiful sight and covered with sores. He declared that he was thus afflicted because he had now nothing to sacrifice. The present Chief stated that before the white man came, the *Tegatu* was the only Chief known and that all lost things belonged to him, including any part of a dead antelope which touched the ground, 'Now, owing to the power of the white man, I receive such things, but I give a portion to the *Tegatu*. Formerly, the *Tegatu*,<sup>2</sup> assisted by the *nu-kwena* (old men) settled cases. A *Tegatu* cannot leave his work, as a white man's Chief has to do, who is often being called to come and see the European.'

The division of a settlement into sections—a system which has been fully described elsewhere—is again a feature of Awuna village organization. A section is called *so-* (or *san*)-*yu*; it is in charge of a *so-yu kwëa* (Head of a section). A number of *so-yu* make up a *teo* (settlement).

The old *Tegatu* of Pina gave me the following account of his office, from which it will be seen that the Awuna *Tegatu* and the *Ten'dana* of the Moshi-speaking group are identical. 'My shrine is a *tangwane*; it is a small stone. When hunger comes, I ask for fowls from the Elders and offer them. I ask for rain. If any one wishes to make a new farm, they come to me with a fowl, which I offer at the *tangwane*, saying: "So-and-so is hungry and wants to make a new farm." I show him the land—as much as he can cultivate. He will give me a calabash of the first-fruits, but need not give anything after that. If any man killed another, shedding his blood, my boys would climb on the flat roof or on the midden heap and beat a *gulu* drum saying: "Some one has done an evil thing, if he does not bring a cow and cowries, his house will come to an end." The murderer and the Elders would meet at the *tangwane*; the cow would be sacrificed and shared among all.'

The penalty for murder of a clansman by a fellow clansman was a fine of from one to six cows according to the wealth of the murderer's

<sup>1</sup> *Tega*—earth; *tu*—owner of.

<sup>2</sup> The *Tegatu* is also called *Tangwantu* (owner of the grove) or *Teo-tu* (owner of a town).



family. The *Tegatu* would also tell the townspeople to raid the farms and compounds of the murderer's household, the occupants of which would run to the bush. They would later get a 'sister's son' to intercede for them. The murderer was made to drink the blood (cooked) of the sacrifice mixed with earth taken from where the *vene* (shrine) stood); he would also have to bathe in medicine.

When blood was shed, but no one killed, a sheep, or goat, or fowl, was sacrificed on the spot with the words: 'Blood has fallen on you; here is a fowl to remove it'. If this were not done, the crops would fail. A cross on stones protects the crops from menstrual blood, as among the Isala. A *Tegatu* did not go to war, nor did the Elders do so. If war came to the town, the Elders from behind would exhort the young men. When there was fighting against a town in which a clansman's own sisters or daughters were married, these women were allowed to pass unmolested between the two hostile settlements. They would eventually be employed by the *Tegatu* to carry dry ashes and scatter them between the combatants. Each side had thereafter to purify the land.

A brass ring found on the land belonged to the *Tegatu*; a wounded animal that escaped but died later, was also his property. If any one found something but did not disclose the fact, even when the *Tegatu* knew he had done so, he would not take any action. 'Sooner or later, misfortune would overtake that person or his family and he would himself go to the *Tegatu* with peace offerings. A *Tegatu* could refuse to allow a person to be buried on the land; this gave him power. When things did not prosper under a *Tegatu*, he was not removed from his post, he would himself soon die.'

The Fëra do not circumcise. The incision ceremony for girls is performed during infancy—from a few days after birth up to about the age of four or five years. They bury their dead in family vaults, like the Isala; the graves are in the yards of the compounds. A *Tegatu* is, however, buried in his own room.

The clan avoidance is here, as elsewhere, used as a form of oath, to deter another from doing something which the person using it does not wish that person to do; it is thus the conditional curse. *A du da Kampoa* (I swear by *Kampoa*). *Dura* is an oath. To ask, 'What oath do you swear?' (*N'dura ne ko?*), is the equivalent of inquiring, 'To what clan do you belong?'.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the *Kampoa* avoidance, with the subsidiary taboos of

<sup>1</sup> Also expressed by saying: *N'chulu ne ko?* (What is your avoidance?).

*Nankangweo* and *Tigayie*,<sup>1</sup> other Fëra clans are *Nyon* (Crocodile) and *Deon* (Python).<sup>2</sup> Other Awuna clans will be noted when the Nagwa come up for investigation. The Fëra do not tattoo. When members of the tribe are seen with facial markings, it will be found on further investigation that there is some special history attached to them, e.g. the tattooed person may have been captured by Babatu, or may have gone as a child to live elsewhere.

On the death of a Fëra, a kinsman takes some leaves of a tree called *kaporo* (*pilli*, in Isalen; *kenkana*, in Nankane). The leaves of this tree have a very rough surface almost like sand-paper. He then 'sand-papers' the legs of the corpse saying the while he does so, 'The *chulu* (avoidance) which you have, do not go with it to the spirit world (*kyiru*) let it come out from you.' The leaves so used are then thrown away.

The volatile soul of a living person, which the Isala call *dema*, is called in Fëra, *duna*, and has a similar little mud shrine made for it.

*Fëra Marriage Customs*: The suitor gives the girl of his choice 200 cowries as a gift, also some 3,000 cowries and a cloth for the girl's brothers', who will eventually escort their 'sister' to the bridegroom's town, where a dog or goat will be killed for them. The bridegroom will previously have spent a night at his future mother-in-law's compound, but must not, on any account, have sexual relations with the girl on that occasion.

After the bride has gone to her husband, he will take 1,000 cowries to each of his parents-in-law, and another 1,000 for any one of importance in their compound. The head of the woman's section is also given about sixpence worth of kola-nuts and informed that the marriage has taken place. Again, we find one man, who is resident in the woman's village, and is the son of a woman from the bridegroom's village, and another man, who is a resident in the husband's village, who is the son of a woman from, the bride's town, who are appointed as representatives of the parties in any future negotiations concerning bride-price, &c. This is not claimed unless and until children have been born of the marriage, when two cows or more may be asked for. These cows have to be found by the head of the husband's family.

Marriage with cross-cousins is not permitted. A son may marry a girl-widow of his own father, provided the latter had never had

<sup>1</sup> These subsidiary avoidances are very possibly in the nature of *Toma*, see p. 494.

<sup>2</sup> Pina, Pean (Fr.), Preta (Fr.), Navaro, are *Kampoa*, and members of this clan are also found in Netolo; Tamvele is *Nyon* (Crocodile); Netolo is *Deon* (Python).

intercourse with her. Marriage with two sisters is allowed. Clans are in theory exogamous, but when actual relationship cannot be traced, the Elders informed me that some people would not now consider such possible remote kinship an absolute bar to marriage.

The Awuna, like the Kasena, had a reputation for being, according to civilized standards, very lax in morals. An old Awuna Fëra informed me that husbands did not trouble very much whether their wives were faithful or not, and would even go out and leave them alone with their lovers. The *ménage de trois* already described was a common and recognized arrangement. Prenuptial chastity was not expected, but a girl who became *enceinte* before marriage would hasten to find a husband before the birth of her child.

*Mother-in-law Observances among the Fëra:* 'A man does not eat with his mother-in-law out of the same calabash. He may not sit on the same mat with her. When he meets her on the path, he will squat down and greet her, even if he were a Chief, for she has power to take her daughter away from him. If my own mother dies, and at the same time my mother-in-law dies, I would leave my own mother's funeral to attend that of my mother-in-law. A man must respect his mother-in-law, so that when he has a quarrel with his wife, his mother-in-law will take his part. If a son-in-law goes to his mother-in-law's compound, and has sexual intercourse with any woman there, they will take his wife away without giving back any of his cows, and if the husband asks for them back, he will be told, 'You have had sexual intercourse with your mother-in-law, you have forfeited all. If a mother-in-law does not come often to see her son-in-law, it shows that she does not love him. A man can be more familiar with brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.'

Leaving the Fëra, and travelling further east, we come to another Awuna-speaking group who call themselves *Nagwa*. This group comprise the settlements of Kopun, Konchoggo, and Uru (Wuru). The clan avoidance is *Dinzina*<sup>1</sup> (Black snake). The futility of inferring a common origin for any groups in the Northern Territories, merely because they talk a common language or because they bear a common tribal name, is well exemplified in the case of the Nagwa. Some of these people came to see me at Pina, and I was immediately impressed with the difference in physique and in facial characteristics which distinguished them from the Fëra. They bore a striking resemblance to the Fulani, from whom, indeed, they, or at any rate a section of this

<sup>1</sup> This word is also pronounced *Dunzene*.

ruling class, profess to trace their descent as the following tradition records.

*History of Kopun:* 'Our ancestor came from Fol-pun (lit. Fulani settlement). He was a hunter called Nacheru. He had herds of cattle and wandered with them until he came to Doa (in French Territory). Here he married a Kasena woman called Kayaga, who bore him two sons, Babu and Bamoa. From Doa, Nacheru and his wife and children went to the Builsa country (near Tchana) and thence to Wale Wale. The people of Wale Wale and of Gambaga gave him cattle to herd,<sup>1</sup> and he settled near a river called Wuru (near Wale Wale) and again married, this time a Wale Wale woman. Nacheru had to leave this place because he stole a ceremonial fibre dress called *Nwuu* used at funeral customs.<sup>2</sup> He was driven from his home near Wale Wale, leaving his Wale Wale wife and her children behind. To this day, if the people of Ulu go to Wale Wale, they share in any sacrifice made there. Nacheru settled next at Wela, near Konchoggo, and there he died, leaving his two sons, Babu and Bamoa. The Isala accused them of stealing yams and drove them away, after which they went to Pina. Here they were caught stealing pumpkins, and again driven away, going to Pean (Fr.) and Kunu (Fr.). The Pudon *Tegatu* gave them land,<sup>3</sup> and they settled at Wuru, which they so named after the old home near Wale Wale. Here Kayaga died. Bamoa once went hunting from Wulu (Ulu) and killed a bush-cow and carried back the meat to his elder brother. He left his flint and steel, however, at the place where the animal had fallen and went back to look for it. On returning to the spot, he liked the place so well that he decided to settle there, and did so, founding Koa-pun (Kopun) (*Koa*, flint and steel). The descendants of Bamoa are the people of Kopun; those of Wulu are descended from Babu. We were formerly Mohammedans. Our women still milk cows. They no longer dress their hair in the Fulani fashion; we have now become Kasena-Fëra.'

The arrival of the Nagwa people<sup>4</sup> in these parts cannot have been very long ago. They give a list of seven names, beginning with that of Babu, as follows: Babu, Yalere, Wayiga, Nantimoa, Wefa, Bawea, and Duwari, and state that Europeans first came in the time of Wayiga.

The descendants of Bamoa who have ruled the settlement of Kopun as *Tegatu* are given as follows: Bamoa, Banolea, Tumpore, Kyere,se,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 410.

<sup>2</sup> *Seku* or *sigu* in dialect of Tumu; see p. 506.

<sup>3</sup> This proves that the land was already occupied.

<sup>4</sup> i.e., of those who now form the ruling class.

Bayaga, Badatie, Kaba. 'In the time of Kyerese, the French first came to these parts.'

The Nagwa had Chiefs before the arrival of Europeans. These they called *Peo*. They were distinct from *Tegatu*. There have been seven of these *Peo* at Kopun, i.e. Yirebeduna, Bakyepun, Bafo, Badebio, Badua, Kaba,<sup>1</sup> Badiyiga (the present Chief). 'Yirebeduna was given his Chieftainship by Gambaga (i.e. the Mampruse).' When I expressed surprise at this statement, my informants asked, 'Did not the Mampruse give Chiefs even to Wagadugu (Moshi) ?'

The succession to a *Peoship* was, my informants stated, arranged as follows. Various applicants took gifts—a cow, sheep, or goat—to the *Tegatu*, who then consulted with his Elders. In case of difficulty in making a decision, the *voro* (Isalen, *vorogo*), soothsayer, was consulted. The one chosen to be *Peo* had a horn put round his neck containing some earth from the *Tengwan*, over which a fowl and a cow had been sacrificed. This horn (called *Na'nyogo* or *kwara*) ensured children and wives and good crops to the people. 'If a *Peo* were a bad man, the *Tegatu* had power to remove him.'

A *Tegatu's* successor was the next senior in the *nayugu* (section). 'He was the one to be given the *Tengwan seo* (the *Tengwan* knife).'

*Land Tenure*: The following notes on this subject were made at Ulu<sup>2</sup> (Wuru). 'If a man wants land to cultivate, he will give a fowl to him who has the land. If the land has not been allocated, the person to go to is the *Tegatu*, who is given some tobacco and two fowls. One fowl he sacrifices to his ancestor, saying, 'So-and-so wants to eat on the land.' The second fowl is sacrificed on the new farm. The *Tegatu* will select a stone and sacrifice the fowl upon it saying: '*Tega* (Land), my ancestor owned this land, and my father, and I too now own it. So-and-so wants to eat on it, do not let him fall ill or any accident happen to him.' The farmer will later give the *Tegatu* a basket of whatever crops the land produces. This land descends to the heirs of the donee, but if these fail, it reverts to the *Tegatu*. The farmer may continue to give the *Tegatu* some of the crops for a few years, when, if the *Tegatu* is pleased with him, he may give him the land outright. The farmer will bring a sheep or goat or a fowl and some beer and cooked grain food. The *Tegatu* will say, 'I once gave this man the land to farm upon; he has done well and I am pleased with him, therefore

<sup>1</sup> Not the Kaba, above.

<sup>2</sup> At Ulu, the *Tegatu* and Chief in the modern sense were one and the same person.

I now give him this place."<sup>1</sup> Farmer and *Tegatu* eat of the food brought.

When a *Tegatu* gives a man land to eat on, this does not entitle the tenant to transfer the land to another and to receive a fowl. When the *Tegatu* says, *A wa pole de n'wante ne gya ba a pe m kumama* (My belly is white with what you have given me, I give you all), then the farmer can divide the land and give to others and receive presents from them, but even then he will inform the *Tegatu*. In neither case, however, does the farmer obtain any right to iron or a ring found on the land. If he kept such, his house would come to ruin. To-day a man is entitled to keep any white cloth he may find on his land, but not a black one. Of any dead game, a hind leg belongs to the *Tegatu*. A *Tegatu* not a *Peo* looks after the land. A *Tegatu* has the power to dispossess any landowner who gives him trouble. When blood was spilled on the land, the one who shed it had to bring a cow, or sheep, or goat, or fowl, according to his wealth.

#### *Duties of the Tegatu before the Advent of Europeans.*

1. He allocated land as described.
2. He made arrangements for necessary sacrifices, thanksgivings for crops and rain; he purified the land.
3. Met with Elders under a tree to discuss important matters. The *Tegatu* called on the *Peo* to attend when required.
4. Because he owned the land, he had to be informed before any one could be buried.

The *Peo*, among the Awuna, like the *Koro* of the Isala, as far as I could gather, was formerly more or less of a figure-head; people used to farm for him; he took any loot or captives as the result of forays, but gave a cow and a slave to the *Tegatu* out of what he got; people used to help him build his house; if any one died suddenly 'the *Peo* would claim two cows from his family, but would give one to the *Tegatu*'.

We find a repetition here of what seems everywhere to be the case. Where there were small Territorial Chiefs functioning in olden times, their rule was generally more or less a titular affair and their authority was largely dependent upon the goodwill of their subjects. The latter led their own lives under their former constitutional leaders, with a minimum of interference from these secular Chiefs.

*Marriage Customs, as told me by the Elders at Ulu:* When a young man

<sup>1</sup> See *Asbanti Law & Constitution*, Chapter XXXIII.

sees the girl whom he loves, he will give 500 cowries to her 'brother'<sup>1</sup> and ask him to give it to his 'sister'. If the girl likes the young man, she will accept the cowries and take them to her mother. Later, the suitor will himself come and greet his future parents-in-law, taking 3,000 to 4,000 cowries as a present for them. The 'brother' will then ask for another 3,000 cowries (about 3s.) and a cloth, and when he receives these, he will hand over his 'sister' to the man. After an interval, which may vary from ten days to a year after the girl has gone to her husband, the 'brother' will send his brother-in-law a message that he and his 'brothers' are coming 'to eat a dog', or they may even arrive without any notice at their married 'sister's' compound and commence to seize fowls and take tobacco and anything they can find lying about. The inmates of the compound pretend to resist them, and finally the 'brothers' climb on the flat roofs and remain there until a fowl is killed and thrown up to them, when they are asked to come down and state their business. They descend, and say that they have come to eat a dog.<sup>2</sup> A dog is killed and cooked, and after they have eaten it, the strangers will say that they have come for the *ka sue kware*, lit. what follows marrying a woman. The bridegroom's father then brings 15,000 cowries and a gown.<sup>3</sup> These are for the father of the girl. The mother of the bride now makes a new mat and cooks shea butter and goes to visit her son-in-law where she is entertained and guinea-fowls are killed for her. On the day she returns home, she is given a sheep and perhaps 3,000 cowries in return for her gifts.

When the woman bears a child, her father may then claim three cows, known as *boko kwaga nau* (a daughter's behind cows). Each party in a marriage has a person who acts as a messenger in case of any negotiations between the man's and his wife's relations, or *vice versa*, e.g. in the event of a funeral at a father-in-law's compound, or in the event of any dispute arising out of the marriage. These persons are respectively, a son of a woman of the bridegroom's town, who had married a clansman of the bride, and a son of a woman of the bride's town, who had married a clansman of the bridegroom. The title of this individual in each case is *kayinu* (lit. some one in front of a woman).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not necessarily her own brother, it may be any man of her clan resident in her town.

<sup>2</sup> Among the Nankanse, when a woman has left one husband and gone off to another man, her 'brothers' come and loot in this manner, but not in the case of an ordinary marriage.

<sup>3</sup> Among the Kasena of Paga, I was informed that cowries were not paid, only a hoe, a sheep, and a goat.

<sup>4</sup> Compare the *pogosigera*, *sipatoru*, &c., in other tribes.

The first gifts, even if the cows are never paid, give the husband a certain right over the children, in so far as it constitutes a legal marriage. If a man is poor, and cannot afford the cows, the father-in-law, 'if a good man', will not take his son-in-law's wife away, but will wait for the cows even until his daughter's son grows up and is able to find the cows due for his own mother.

*Kan segale*: When a woman loves a man, but her parents will not agree to the marriage, the man may then carry off the girl. The parents will follow and the usual formalities are then carried out.

*Some Notes on a Funeral Custom attended at Ulu on December 18, 1929*: The wives and children of the deceased, and wives of his brothers and his brother's children had white clay smeared on both cheeks. The grandsons had red clay on each cheek.

Just before the corpse was interred, the eldest son of the eldest brother of the deceased approached the corpse holding a small chicken in his left hand and a branch of leaves of a tree, called in Awuna *kāpero*, in his right. He swept the branch over the body and then touched the chicken with it and immediately after killed it by beating its head on the ground. The *Tegatu*, who at Ulu is also the Chief, stood beside him and spoke as follows: 'You are a younger brother of my father, and when you came to live here from French country you told me that when you died I must bury you properly. To-day you are dead, when you go to the spirit world look after your wives and children, and when they take up a hoe, let them get food.'

The son then addressed his father saying: '*Anyina, tutce dem no tona bu komo a ke su ko toga amu lire ko no ɛ yera ne bu ko mama alea su ko toga amu, mina ko a ne rare a no koe varo se ku se. Lora kaka gore se ka toga amu*' (Father, the work which you did, it is that which I am taking from your body; all that was in your body, I want to follow me; grain which you were cultivating, when I take the hoe, let it agree to follow me, the begetting which has been cut off from you, let it follow me).

The body was now placed in an old mat and carried from the yard, which was just outside his hut, back into the hut. 'It is unkind not to show the dead his room just before burial.' Here the corpse was rolled up in a mat. As it was again being carried outside, the widow stood with her back to the doorway holding three stalks of grass, *mei* (Nankane *mia*). Another woman caught her arm and guided it behind her and made her beat the corpse three times as it passed out. This action, I was informed, was to prevent the love of the husband from



causing him to take his wife's soul into the grave. The body was quickly taken out of the mat, and let down feet first into the grave, into which some of the sextons had already lowered themselves. While this was being done, the Chief and 'sons' of the deceased were throwing down cowries from the flat roof overlooking the yard, in which the interment was taking place. 'The dead sees this money and takes it to the spirit world.' These cowries were immediately picked up by women and children. 'They will buy food with them, and when they eat, the spirit is eating.'

Inside the grave, one of the sextons (*baya*) broke an egg into a potsherd and dipped the left hand of the deceased into it. He then placed his hands over the ears of the corpse. The potsherd containing the egg was brought to the surface and the left hand of each grandchild was smeared with some of the egg. The Chief of Ulu told me that the Nagwa, both men and women, are buried facing east, contrary to the usual custom. The pot covering the mouth of the grave was waved with a circular motion three times before being replaced over the entrance to the grave; it was then plastered over with wet earth.

The following further information concerning Nagwa funeral customs was told me by the Chief and Elders of Ulu. A male corpse is bathed and oiled by wives of his brothers. It is then dressed in a white or dark-blue gown and a white cap, and set down in a sitting position on a seat outside the door of the hut. A wife sits on each side fanning off flies with a horse-tail switch and stroking the arms of the corpse. The body may be exposed thus for two or three days. If the deceased had a 'son', he will bring a fowl, which he will kill at his father's feet by knocking its head on the ground. This fowl is left lying near the body and will later become the perquisite of the *baye* (sextons). On the actual day of burial, the eldest 'son' will take a chicken and pass it over his 'father's' body saying, 'What is in your body, I am taking to mine.' He then beats the chicken to death and it is cast away for hawks. A corpse is generally carried round the compound three times before burial (four if a woman). All pockets and any 'red' threads are removed from the clothes in which the corpse is buried. A woman who has borne many children may be buried in a gown. Men and women may be buried in the same grave. Graves are roughly the shape of a decanter and may hold as many as from ten to twenty bodies.

The head of a house is buried in his room; a person of lesser importance outside his room, in the courtyard. People who die of

small-pox are buried in the bush and the grave completely filled in. People who die of leprosy are buried outside the compound. The Nagwa at Ulu informed me that formerly they held a funeral custom some months after burial, when beer was cooked, and the bow, quiver, mats, and stool of the deceased were taken to the cross-roads and burned and the fire quenched with beer. The widows then shaved.

'After the Zaberma slave raiders descended upon us many died, and we were unable to hold this funeral custom. An ancestor of the present Chief later tried to hold a funeral custom for all these, killing many sheep and mentioning many names of the dead. Some names were omitted, however, and these spirits became angry. Now, in order to avoid giving them further cause for displeasure, this second funeral is dispensed with altogether and widows now shave their heads three days after burial and as soon as it grows a little it is cut all round, and they may marry again.' During widowhood, a widow carries a stalk of grass in her hand and wears waist-beads called *sara nswana*. She may not speak, even in answer to a salutation, and for this reason goes about accompanied by another woman who will reply for her. 'The spirit of her late husband would seize her if she spoke' and would beat any man who had sexual intercourse with her.

Younger brothers or even sons of the deceased are permitted to take their elder brother's or father's widows as wives, or any other clansman of the deceased may do so. If a widow were to run away, however, and marry a stranger, i.e. a non-clansman of the late husband, 'her late husband's people would wait on the path leading to that town and seize any person from that town and keep him or her until the woman was returned. If a son or younger brother inherits a widow whose *kan-kwaga* has not been paid, what is due must then be paid in full. If this has already been paid, he need then only give about 3,000 cowries or a goat to the woman's parents. When a son marries one of his father's widows, any children born belong to the original husband, i.e. the ghost; if a man marries a brother's widow the children are his own.

'To marry your late father's widow is like having a lover; your brother's widow is your wife.' 'Your father leaves property, why should you not use it?'

The spirit of a woman's late husband may make it known through the soothsayer that he wishes his wife to cook some food for him, and the new husband will then tell her to do so.

*Rules of Succession to Property:* A brother (or half-brother) by the

same father takes farms, trees, live stock, poultry, family shrines, clothes, and wives; but a 'son' will wear the clothes of his father and may be given one of the widows, and he will always take his father's spirit and privately acquired fetishes and 'medicine' and his father's bows and arrows. 'Son' in this context does not mean the eldest son of the deceased; he may be the son of a brother of the deceased if older than the deceased's own natural son. 'Women cannot succeed to property because women may not sacrifice.'

## THE KASENA

*Compounds and Shrines. Marriage and Funeral Customs*

THE Kasen'-speaking people numbered, according to the 1921 Census Report, 43,930, thus being the third largest tribal group in the Northern Province of the Northern Territories. They frequently refer to themselves as Gurense (*Anglice*, Grunshi). Their language, which is called Kasen' or Kasene, has been investigated in a previous volume. In British Territory, the Kasena and Nankanse so overlap, and are in places so intermarried, that it is difficult and sometimes impossible to tell, as one goes further North, where one tribe ends and the other begins. For the purpose of these investigations I visited the Kasena settlement of Paga, not far from the French frontier, which from local report contained comparatively pure Kasena. Here, unfortunately, owing to the personality of the then local ruler—who had usurped to himself and a following of sons, relatives, and other hangers on, the functions of those who should have been his hereditary councillors—it was not possible to obtain information on certain subjects. This omission was not serious, however, from my point of view, as the large mass of evidence already collected elsewhere, on kindred questions, renders it almost a certainty that similar conditions, until recently, must also have existed here. The experience, indeed—which is not uncommon in these parts—of having information withheld or facts deliberately misrepresented, is instructive and interesting. It shows the difficulties and dangers with which the inquirer frequently has to contend in his endeavour to obtain information, which, for obvious reasons, some Native Rulers do not always wish the local Government to know. The Chief of Paga professed profound ignorance, for example, concerning everything pertaining to the old system of clan organization. The land, he said, had always been his. The obvious consternation and the furtive glances which followed certain pertinent questions concerning the old *régime* were almost comical to behold, so, after satisfying myself that no useful purpose would be served by inquiring further about such matters, I passed on, to the great relief of my co-workers, to less controversial topics, concerning which they were ready to give me every assistance.

The town of Paga contains members of the following clans:

*Nyono* (Crocodile).

*Gwero* (Leopard).

*Deo* (Python).

*Chare* (Cricket).

The clan of the local Chief was, however, none of these. He stated that he belonged to the Lion clan (*Nyono*, with a rising accent on the last syllable). *Powara* (Hare) and *Fere* (a kind of Antelope) were also reported to be clans in neighbouring Kasena townships.

A Crocodile clansman stated: 'When a crocodile dies, one of the Crocodile clan dies. Each person knows his or her crocodile. Our ancestor, who was called Nave, was a hunter and came from Kampala' (N. of Paga in French Territory). There is a large pond near the town of Paga which is full of crocodiles of all sizes. They allow one almost to touch them before they slide into the pool. The photograph, Fig. 133, was taken at this spot. Children have the avoidance (*chulu*) of their male parent, and the clans, up to a point, are exogamous. Here again, however, as among the Awuna, the prohibition to marry a clanswoman does not extend to possibly remote kindred where the family tie cannot be demonstrated.<sup>1</sup>

The taint of witchcraft is thought to be transmitted only down the female line. The circle within which marriages are prohibited was described as follows: 'A man may not marry into any group with whom he meets and sacrifices,' and again, 'You cannot marry into your "small mother's" group', i.e. among mother's, or father's mother's relations. Marriages with cross-cousins are prohibited.

*A Kasena Compound and Shrines:* The general design of a Kasena compound appears similar to that already described for the Nankanse (see Chapter XX). A compound is called *sono*. At the entrance usually stands a shrine or shrines of ancestors, called *dwone*, pl. *dwona*, or simply *ko* (father) or *nabalo* (grandfather). As among the Nankanse, shrines of male ancestral spirits are generally kept outside the compound.<sup>2</sup> The shape of these shrines appears often somewhat different from the conical structures with which we have become familiar among the Nankanse. Here, they are more frequently flat, circular mounds, round which are set smaller conical structures. These flat-topped shrines are, however, also found among the Nankanse, where

<sup>1</sup> This happens, I think, only where the clan system is beginning to break down.

<sup>2</sup> Shrines of female spirits are inside, unless joined with those of a male in a sooth-sayer's shrine.

they are known as *ye-kyeya* (the big house), being the shrines of important ancestors, while the lesser important spirits are given the conical mounds. The only difference thus seems to be the joining of the two, among the Kasena. Among the Nabdam and Talense, these flat-topped mounds often mark the actual graves, upon which the sacrifice is made. This indeed, is, I believe, the origin of all these shrines, even where, as in many cases, they are now regarded as distinct from the actual burial place.

Figs 154 and 155 show Kasena shrines at the entrance of a compound. Not only does each cone at the foot of the large flat shrine represent the home of a spirit, but the protuberances on top of the flat mound also serve the same purpose. Thus, the spirits which are represented in the shrine in Fig. 155 are stated to be as follows:

(a), (b) *Ko nyane* (father's brother).

(c) *We* (God).

(d) *Kowe* (father's God). Compare the *Yini* shrine of the Nankanse.

(e), (f) *Ko Nyane* (another, father's brother).

(g) *Ko* (own father).

(h), (i) *Ko* (a father's brother).

Passing through the entrance (*bekyono pena*), one comes into the main yard which is also the cattle-kraal (*nabo*). It contains grain-bins (*tulli*, s. *tule*) and mud shelters for fowls (*kye tugu*). In this particular compound, the yard also contained a grave (*yibele*) in which was buried the 'father' of the present owner of the compound. The separate yards (*kunkolo*)<sup>1</sup> of the various family quarters (*digga*, pl. *di*; *deo* in Nankane) surround the main yard. The beehive entrances to the huts, with the protecting wall across (*kachakalogo*) are similar to those described for the Nankanse. The outside walls of Kasena compounds are often coloured with white and black stripes.

On the death of the father and head of the compound, all the sons, except the eldest, generally 'go out' and make new compounds for themselves. This custom seems to tend to keep down the size of the average Kasena compound. A compound may contain one or more grass-roofed huts (*bisili* in Kasene; *detini* in Nankane), in addition to the more general flat-roofed buildings.

*Kasena Marriage*: The Paga marriage customs appeared to be similar to those already described for the Awuna.

The incision ceremony for girls (*kanyaga*) is not performed, however,

<sup>1</sup> *Zinzaka* in Nankane.

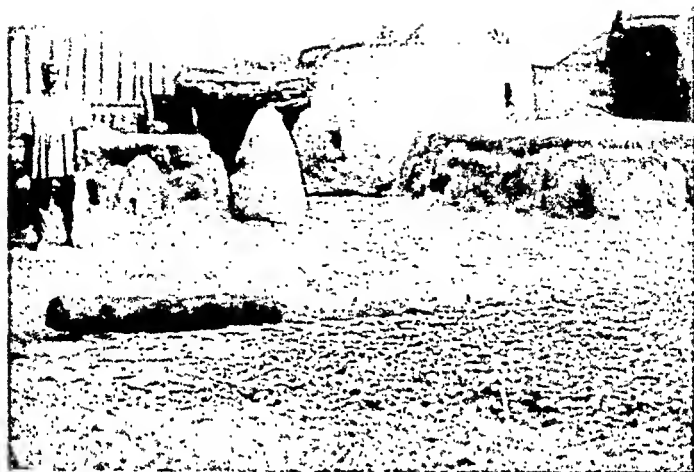


FIG. 154. A Kasena compound with the shrines in the background

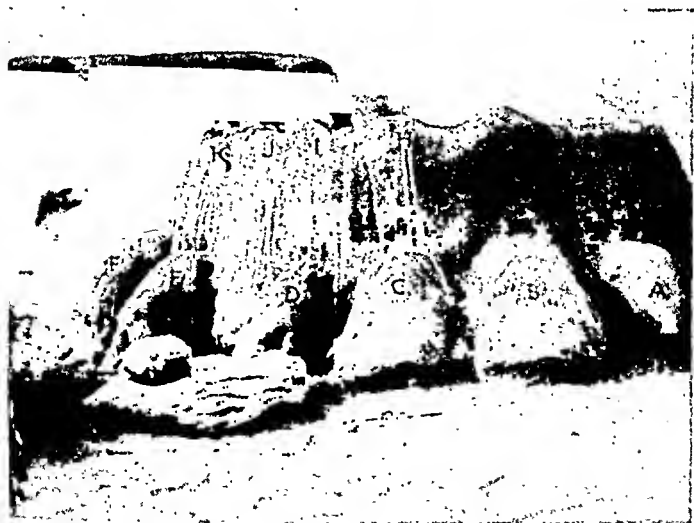


FIG. 155. Kasena shrines

until just before reaching puberty—as is also the case among the Nankanse.

*A Funeral Custom as Practised by the Kasena of Paga (Funeral for an Old Man):* When a man dies, his eldest 'son'<sup>1</sup> will give his 'father's' spirit water. He will also take his 'father's' *lira* (medicine); he will share out his late 'father's' arrows among all his brothers, keeping the bow and quiver and some arrows for himself, and he will also take his 'father's' gown which contains his sweat (*digero*). All the remainder of the deceased's property goes to the heir who is the brother of the deceased. The widows may choose any clansman whom they wish, but are not expected to marry out of that clan.

The head of a compound is generally buried in the yard belonging to the *digga* (quarters) where his senior wife lived. Less senior people are buried in family graves in the main yard, which is also the cattle-*kraal*. The following is from an account in the vernacular:

'A man dies in the arms of his wife. A male corpse is not bathed, only a female corpse. The 'eldest son' of the deceased will dress his 'father's' body in trousers, a robe, and a cap. The *baya* (sextons) are then called in and given two new calabashes, an axe, a hoe, and an axe-handle. These articles have to be supplied by the *ako-bu* (lit. father's children, i.e. clansmen). One of the *ako-bu* then tells the 'son' to show the sextons where he wishes them to make a room (i.e. a grave) for his father. If the deceased were the senior in the compound, the grave will be made in the *kunkolo* (yard) of the senior wife's living quarters. The sextons place one of the calabashes on the spot indicated, after waving it three times over the ground; they then pick up a small stone and drop it on the calabash three times, finally picking it up and beginning to dig. All the time they are digging, they are being encouraged to work by being given cowries, fowls, a goat, and cooked grain food. In olden times, if the deceased had offended the Chief [*sic*], the latter had to be conciliated before he would give permission for the body to be buried. A grave may take as long as two days to dig; meanwhile, the mourners are lamenting and dancing and drumming. The corpse is not publicly exposed to view; it is only seen by relatives—sisters, sister's children, daughters, daughter's children, and mother's relations.

When the sextons have finished digging the grave, they will tell the 'eldest son'—even where the heir is the brother of the deceased,

<sup>1</sup> As has been noted elsewhere, 'son' may here include a son of the deceased's brother and is not necessarily the son of the deceased in the literal sense.



saying: 'If there is anything you wish to take from your father's body, take it.' If the deceased had any 'medicine', the 'son' will then remove it.<sup>1</sup> The 'sons' now take their bows and arrows, and the body is carried out while they dance a war-dance around it. A sheep is killed by knocking its head on the ground. The body is buried facing west.<sup>2</sup> The mouth of the grave is closed with a pot over which clay is plastered. The actual burial is now over. The next stage in the funeral custom may take place immediately or be postponed for a month or a year or even more. The date will depend upon supplies of grain being available for making beer.

When the relations have informed the Elders that all is ready, the heir will take some corn and tobacco and place it in a basket outside the compound. To this, others will add their contributions, until there is sufficient. For the next two days, every one is busy grinding the corn and collecting pots of water, and the third day they begin to cook the beer. All the relatives begin to assemble, bringing fowls, corn, tobacco, and strips of Moshi cloth. When the beer is ready, a leather-worker is ordered to make a miniature quiver and bow. When these are finished, they are carried to the cross-roads. The eldest son of the deceased is then informed, and he goes to the hut of the senior widow and receives from her, bean-cakes and ground-nuts and a pot of beer; he joins those at the cross-roads, to whom he gives the food, receiving from them a leather bag containing the miniature bow and quiver. He then returns to the compound of the deceased. When he reaches it, instead of entering by the main entrance, he passes round the back. Here he climbs into the compound over the wall, while another man climbs on the flat roof of the hut belonging to the deceased's senior wife. The eldest son enters this hut and the man on the roof hands him down—through the hole in the ceiling—the miniature bow and quiver and also three real arrows. He hangs these up on the wall of the hut in that part where the male keeps his things (*gwona*). All the clansmen of the deceased now assemble. The eldest son of each brother of the deceased takes grass stalks and makes a fire in the cattle-kraal. Upon this, the miniature bow and quiver, which have been brought out, are placed. They have been folded in a small new mat, the ends of which have been tied with a strip of Moshi cloth. A pot called *katara*<sup>3</sup> is set down beside them.

<sup>1</sup> This, I think, refers to the symbolical 'sweeping' of the corpse which appears to be such a common practice in these parts.

<sup>2</sup> Women also.

<sup>3</sup> A special pot used only in cooking for men. Kasena women, like many other of

The 'eldest son' now comes forward with a large fowl; a 'half-brother', whose title for this occasion is *chona zageno* (quiver-cutter), cuts off the fowl's head and allows the blood to fall upon the quiver. Each 'son' gives a fowl which is sacrificed in the same manner. The fowls are placed on the *katara* pot; the 'quiver-cutter' takes the whole of the first fowl, but only the necks of the remainder belong to him. The deceased's sister's son also gives a fowl. A war-dance is danced round the burning bow and quiver. The husband of the deceased's eldest daughter and other sons-in-law are now called upon to bring *sakwero* (dregs of beer) to quench the fire which had been lit by a 'sister' of the deceased. 'Come and quench your father's quiver'<sup>1</sup> (*Ba ndoe n'ko chona*), he says. They then bring tobacco, salt, hoes, strips of cloth, and try to put out the fire with these, but the 'quiver-cutter' as quickly snatches them off the fire and transfers them to his bag. At length he calls out, '*Wo ndare?*' (Who remains?), and on receiving no answer, he and a clanswoman of the deceased (*kadeko*) quench the fire with dregs of beer. This ceremony is called *lufula sana* (funeral-burning-beer).

*The Widows:* Among the Kasena, as is the case with so many of these tribes, infidelity to a dead husband is considered a very much more serious matter than infidelity to a living spouse. The following ceremony in connexion with the part taken by the widows on the occasion of the 'funeral-burning-beer' is of interest.

The person known as *kayinenu*,<sup>2</sup> i.e. a son of a woman from the same town as the senior widow, goes off to the bush and cuts branches of the shea butter tree. A 'sister' of the senior widow follows him, sounding the *ule* (shrill cry of women). These branches are set up outside the wall of the compound and a new mat laid across them, forming a rude shelter known as *foro*. Here the widows sit all day, attended by 'sisters' from their own towns, and they only enter the compound after dark, walking in backwards, 'lest the spirit of their late husband throws something in their eyes'. They spend three days in this shelter and must not speak to any man. The third day, the shelter is removed and burned on the midden heap. The widows visit their neighbours carrying a corn-stalk in one hand and a calabash—in which they receive offerings of food, corn, ground-nuts—in the other. When they have collected sufficient, an old woman, known as the *gyan-tu*<sup>3</sup> is called,

the 'Gurense', once they have reached puberty, may not eat fowls, hence special cooking-pots are kept for cooking these for the men.

<sup>1</sup> Really father-in-law's.

<sup>2</sup> The *Isiga* or *Sipatoru*, &c., of other tribes.

<sup>3</sup> 'Owner of the roots.'

who had already put certain waist-strings on the widows. She comes with roots which she boils. A hole is dug near the compound. Towards evening, the old bands on the heads and waists of the widows are removed<sup>1</sup> and their heads shaved, this operation being performed by a man who is a widower. Each widow, beginning with the senior wife, next bathes over the hole with the medicine made from the roots, and is rubbed over with shea butter. Each widow now stands in the hole in turn, and two women come forward, one with a pot of very hot water, the other with a pot of cold. A calabash of the hot water is poured over her head, immediately followed by a calabash of cold water. If the first calabash of hot water scalds the woman and causes her to jump out of the hole, 'every one will know she has had sexual intercourse with some one since her husband's death, and she will be asked to confess and give the name of the adulterer.' This man will be told to bring two fowls—a cock and a hen. Those 'who owned' the guilty widow are called to appear, and also the heads of all the sections in any way concerned. All these meet, and the Elders of the section to which the injured party—that is, the deceased—belonged, show the fowls to the Elders of the section to which the guilty man belonged. The latter group then produce a clansman who is the son of a woman who was a kinswoman of the deceased, who had married in the town from which the widow had originally come. After dark, this man, together with the head of the deceased's section go into the valley. The former kills the cock, and the latter the hen, by beating their heads on the ground, saying as they do so: 'Spirits of land and ancestors, this sin of adultery (*bona*) was a sin to my ancestors, to the land, and to my father. They have brought fowls to remove this sin that it may not follow the woman and her children.'

On the day following the quiver burning, the Elders of the section to which the deceased belonged meet over a large pot of beer to discuss what is to be done with the widows. A calabash of beer is sent by a special messenger to each one of them asking whom they would like to marry. The widows hereupon assume a certain coyness, returning the answer that they could never think of re-marrying. Again, the messenger is sent back to them, but they still pretend to be unconsolable. A third time they are asked; they will then give the name of some small boy or girl, the brother or sister of the man whom they have already decided they would like to marry.

A widow is not forced to go to the heir, but if she will not marry one

<sup>1</sup> New 'white' grass bands are put in their place.

of his clan group, he will claim from the 'stranger' whom she marries, the cows which the deceased, his brother, had had to pay for her.

A son may not marry his own mother or indeed any of the widows from his own mother's town, but may take one of his father's other widows. Children born of such a union are, however, considered the children of the dead man, not of the son. The real father will, in such a case, call his own son '*nyane*', i.e. younger brother, the son calling his father 'elder brother'. 'When a brother has a child by his late brother's wife, that child is, however, his own.'

## THE MAMPRUSE CONSTITUTION

*Tradition of the Origin of the Ruling House at Naleregu, the Capital of the Head-chief (Na) of the Mampruse*

THE following tradition was told me by Haruna, Yahaiya, and Bakyale, Elders of Naleregu.

'Our ancestors came from the east, from a place called Kyam<sup>1</sup> or Kyama. We do not know where Kyam is, but it is east of Gruma, which the Hausa call Fadin Gruma.<sup>2</sup> It is ten days for caravans from here and eight from Bawku. This place was the origin of Dagbama (Dagomba), Mampruse, and Mosi. We left Gruma, because of a quarrel about the Chieftainship. Bawa was the name of the ancestor who left Gruma.<sup>3</sup> His avoidances were lion, leopard, squirrel? (*shishiriga*), horse, hyena, dog, and red pigeon (*manfia*). Bawa first became Chief of Sana. Thence he came to Pusiga where he died. He had a daughter called Yantaure. She refused to marry the man to whom her father wished to give her, and, mounting a stallion (*wa' daugo*), rode away past Pusiga and across a river until she met a hunter, whom she married and by whom she bore a son who was called Wadaugo (Stallion). When Bawa heard of this, he declared that his grandson would one day become Chief of the bush (*mone*), hence the name Moshi. A "brother" of Bawa, called Na Nyashi,<sup>4</sup> became Chief of Yendi, and another "brother", Mantana, became Chief of Bimbila.

'Bawa was succeeded by Tusgo, his son. He made wars and extended his rule as far as to Mampurugu. It was from this town that we took the name of Mampruse. Tusgo died at Mampurugu and is buried there.<sup>5</sup> He was succeeded by his "son" Banmalagu. He made war on the Konkomba and on the Grunse—the name by which we call all the people who live between here and Leo. He settled at Gambaga and is buried there. He was succeeded by his "younger brother", Na

<sup>1</sup> The name is said to mean 'darkness'.

<sup>2</sup> Yet another tradition states that the Mampruse rulers came from a country called Lobawa, east of Sokoto. 'It was a country almost surrounded by a river. They fled from there because of the army of Shehu dan Fodio.' In any case, the date must have been prior to the nineteenth century.

<sup>3</sup> The Dagomba of Yendi pronounce this name Gbewa.

<sup>4</sup> See history of Dagomba, Chapter LXI.

<sup>5</sup> 'I have seen his grave,' added one of my informants.

Gwegema (King Lion). He made war as far as to Leo, to the Dagaba country, and to Daboya. He died at Gambaga, but we do not know his grave. He was succeeded by Zomsaa, a son of Banmalagu. He died and is buried here (Gambaga). He was succeeded by Namwaali, a son of Zomsaa. He wished to show his power by building a house in the river, but was drowned with many others in the attempt. He was succeeded by Bantana Zibrim (relationship not stated). This is a Mohammedan name, but we were not Mohammedans at this time, although we circumcised; our women did not "cut". We wore skins and the women leaves and we had shields (*Wanderbano*). Bantana Zibrim was succeeded by Kapana Na Sigere a son of Na Gwegema. In his time, the Kambonse (the Ashanti) tried to come here but we drove them away; they, however, defeated Yendi. Na Sigere is buried near Gambaga; a large tree marks the grave. He was succeeded by Nwantoali, his son, who was succeeded by Atabea<sup>1</sup>, son of Namwaali. He went to the Brong country, following the route by Wale Wale, Daboya, Bole, Mango Toro, Kolongo. This *Na* brought back a number of strangers with him and they settled later at the place they called Sansani Mango. Their descendants are to-day known as the Chakosi, and still talk a language understood by the Ashanti.<sup>2</sup>

'Atabea, on his return from this journey, made war against the Kpemkpwamba (Konkomba) who were at that time at Naleregu. He defeated them and left Gambaga to settle at Naleregu. Although he himself was not a Mohammedan, he put a Liman (a Mohammedan priest) and a Gambarana in charge of the town of Gambaga.<sup>3</sup> Atabea died at Naleregu; his grave is there, and is given water. Atabea's son, Yamusa (alias Na Jarena, Red Snake), succeeded his father. He built the wall round the town of Naleregu because he did not wish hyenas to enter it. The clay with which the walls were built was mixed with honey and beer which he made his subjects bring. He sent North, South, East, and West and collected one thousand girls and one thousand youths and paired them off in huts and gave them clothes, but said they need not do any work. One of his sons, Asani, became Chief of Wunu; another son, Shaene, was made Chief of Kurugu. Yamusa died and was buried in his house at Naleregu. He was succeeded by Mahaman Na Kurugu (Chief of Iron). He was very fierce and used to catch the Chakosi people who lived at Sansansi Mango, cut off their heads, take their beards and hang them round his neck. He was driven out and fled to Wagadugu where he died. He was

<sup>1</sup> His real name was Zontua.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 458.

succeeded by Naba Pisi Sulumani who was a son of Atabea. His reign was peaceful. He was succeeded by Haruna Na Bono (Dense Bush) who had fled with his "father" to Wagadugu but had returned. He died and was buried at Naleregu. He was succeeded by his "younger brother", Andani. Seven days after he became Chief he was shot by some Chakosi who had come to attend the funeral custom of Haruna. They were instigated to do so by a section of the people who did not wish Andani to be *Na*. A dispute now arose about the *Na*-ship. Mahama, son of Naba Pisi, and Abubakari, son of Na Kurugu, both wished to become Chief. The rivals met and fought at Gawanshio. Abubakari defeated Mahama, who fled to Bawku and thence to Sansani Mango where he raised an army of ten thousand Chakosi. Abubakari raised an army of seven thousand Konkomba. They fought at Gawanchio and Mahama defeated Abubakari and drove him to Tunne where they again fought. Abubakari fled to Gyana (near Diari). Here, on the Sugubuna river, Abubakari was killed. Mahama was henceforth given the title of Kuliga-ba (River-dog). Mahama sent his son, Salafu, to the Chief of Bongo (near Nangode) to tell him to supply fifty girls and fifty youths to give to the Chakosi who had assisted him. Mahama died, and his son Salafu, became *Na*; he ruled forty years in peace. On his death, a dispute arose about the Chieftainship between Abudarahamani, son of Kuliga-ba, and his brother, Amaru. Abudarahamani, who had only thirty guns, defeated Amaru who had fifteen hundred. Amaru was driven to Wale Wale where he was killed. Abudarahamani took the title of Big Tree (Dambono). He ruled for three years and then died at Naleregu where he was buried. He was succeeded by Dawura, son of Salafu. He ruled in peace for seventeen years. When he died, his younger brother, Yimbashi, and Azabu, also a son of Salafu, both wished to become Chief. Yimbashi collected an army of seven hundred Konkomba, but they ran away to Bono. Azabu became Chief and ruled for fourteen years. After his death, Gane, son of Dambono, and Ya Musa, son of Salafu, both claimed the Chieftainship and fought at Gambaga. Gane was defeated and fled to Karaga. The Chief of Karaga gave him four hundred guns and one hundred and sixty horses. He met Ya Musa at Latari. Gane was defeated and driven to Bagere where he died. Ya Musa took the title of Na Berega (The Razor). He ruled for thirty-seven years. Seven years before his death, the Europeans came and he was their friend. He was succeeded by Sulimanu, son of Azabu, whose title was Na Sigere (First Rains). He ruled only three years before he died.

He was succeeded by Ziniya (alias Nab Zore), who was a son of Salafu. He ruled four years and was succeeded by Mahama Na Woboga (The Hawk), who was the son of Dawura. He ruled eight years and was followed by Mahama Na Wafo (The Snake), a son of Ya Musa; he is *Na to-day*.' (See Fig. 127).

The above tradition records the names or titles of twenty-four head Chiefs of the Mampruse. It gives us an approximate idea of the origin and duration of the so-called Mampruse, Moshi, and Dagomba 'empires', *qua* 'empires'. There is not any doubt in my own mind, that it would be wrong to ascribe the starting-point and date of arrival in these areas, of the mass of the populations, who are to-day grouped under the above names, to the same chronological sequence of events. The inhabitants of Moshi, Mampruse, and Dagomba were almost certainly resident in or near their present habitats, speaking the language they now speak, and practising the customs which have been examined in these two volumes, centuries before the ancestors of those who are now their rulers appeared upon the scene. These strangers only gave, in each case, a single name to hitherto scattered and independent groups which they succeeded in welding into the loose confederacies not uncommon in this part of Africa. It is always advisable, I think, when speaking or writing about such amalgamations as those which comprise, for example, the Mampruse, Moshi, or Dagomba States, to retain a strict sense of proportion and to describe the course of these events in terms of restraint. Under the conditions existing when these States were first founded, a band of a score or less of well-armed and determined fighting men could, and often did, alter the political face of the map. The real significance of such 'conquests' is apt to be exaggerated in our eyes. We are over prone to visualize absolute monarchs and autocratic forms of Government, in what, in a rather grandiose manner, we describe as these 'great empires in pagan Africa'. As a matter of fact, such amalgamations affected the real inner life of the common people hardly at all. The greatest of such 'empires' existed only because decentralization and the right to manage their own affairs, in their own way, was the keynote of every attempt at effective provincial control. All this, the European often finds it difficult to understand. More than half our troubles in connexion with Indirect Rule, are due, I believe, to failure to realize these basic principles. The strangers who occupied the posts of Territorial Rulers, throwing out an ever widening circle of authority, which became more and more nominal the further the area to be



administered extended from the centre, seem to have contributed nothing to the local indigenous languages, which they themselves in every case appear to have adopted. They did not contribute anything to the local religious beliefs, which, abandoning Islam, they eventually came to follow. Their only important contribution seems to have been in the administrative machinery which they eventually introduced. It is very doubtful, however, whether this was their own invention or even the application of something with which they had been familiar in their original homes. One fact alone stands out clearly. The framework on which the Native Administration of Mampruse and Dagomba was based, is a similar structure to that with which students of the Akan constitution are now familiar. That this is no chance resemblance, or case of possible convergent evolution, will be clear from a comparison of the data contained in the following and subsequent chapters, with the information collected on similar subjects among the Akan, to which I would refer my readers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

THE MAMPRUSE CONSTITUTION (*continued*)*The Personnel at the Court of the Na. The Enstoolment of the Na. Sources of the Na's Revenue*

THE *Na*: This title, which is apparently a contraction for the longer word *Nab'* or *Naba* (pl. *Nabdema*) is used throughout the Northern Territories to designate the Territorial or Secular Rulers as opposed to the old-time spiritual leaders—the *Ten'dama*. The word is used in a wide sense, embracing as it does all grades of these secular Chiefs from the head of a few mud compounds to the 'King' of the Native State.<sup>1</sup> This comprehensive use of the word is a further proof of the decentralization to which reference has already been made. Etiquette, however, demands that the title of *Na* be dropped by the lesser Chief in the presence or within the immediate jurisdiction of his superior. In such cases the former is referred to as merely 'owner of such and such a town' (*-dana*). In the present context, however, when the word *Na* is used, it is to the head-Chief of the country that reference is made, unless the contrary is stated or implied.

*Rules of Succession for the Na-ship*: There appears to be a general similarity in the rules governing the succession to the *Na-ship* and certain other more important Chieftainships among Mampruse, Dagomba, Gonja, and Wala, which distinguish these appointments from those posts which go merely to the highest bidder. There are, however, many and frequent exceptions to these rules caused by their infringement by those who refused to be bound by them and took the law into their own hands to obtain the posts which they desired. In spite of these irregularities, there are certain broad principles which, even if not scrupulously followed in every case, are at least clearly recognized as the correct procedure. These rules and the history of their growth were somewhat as follows: the first Rulers, whose influence and authority were more or less confined to a single town or centre (which later became the capital of the State), as their power increased, sent forth relatives—brothers and sons—to occupy lesser posts in neighbouring settlements. Those who went far afield sometimes

<sup>1</sup> Just as in Ashanti, *Obene* meant either the King or the Chief of an insignificant village. It is just possible that the root of this word, *naba*, may be the same as in the Akan *nana*—; often used to address a chief, c.f. *Nana Prempeh*.

founded new States, e.g. Dagomba and Moshi. Sons remained in touch with the parents' house, thus it came about that the Chieftainships of certain towns came to be regarded as the perquisites of sons of the chief Ruler, and reserved for these scions of the royal house. As descent among these foreign rulers was traced through the male line, a son hoped one day to succeed his father—the *Na*. The former would thus sooner or later come to leave his outlying Chieftainship, thus creating a vacancy therein which, again, could only be filled by a 'prince' of the royal line. A kind of promotion-roster thus came to be evolved. Certain posts, subordinate to the *Na*-ship, came to be recognized as graduated stepping-stones to that office. Each potential successor to the *Na*-ship moved up one each time there was a vacancy caused by the holder of the senior of these lesser posts having been elevated to the *Na*-ship. The lowest post of all would by this process become vacant and should then, in theory, be filled by a son of the new *Na*. This man, again in theory, would then have to await his turn to become *Na* until he eventually reached the highest office in the State by passing in turn through each of the intervening stages. In other words, it was always the son of the *Na* most remote who should succeed. Another rule was, I am informed, that a brother should not immediately succeed a brother, if there were any other possible successor who had not as yet held the office. Yet another rule, which appears to be strictly observed, is that a son could not rise any higher than the post which his father had reached. Thus, if, for any reason, the son of a *Na* never became *Na*, his son, although a *Na*'s grandson, could never become *Na*, and this line became ineligible for the highest position in the State.<sup>1</sup>

In actual practice, and when taking concrete examples, it seems difficult to trace the working of the above rules, as the following account will show. I was repeatedly told that So-and-so took the law into his own hands and seized the post of *Na* by force. These irregularities, which upset the even pattern of the theoretical design, are practised even to-day.

'A new *Na* could be selected from any of the following towns, the senior of which is Bulkweri. The Chiefs of these towns were originally *Na bisi*, i.e. *Nas'* children.'

1. *Bulkweri*.
2. *Bbinse*.
3. *Zandana*.
4. *Nagbo*.
5. *Kparagu*.

6. *Gbon*.
7. *Nasia*.
8. *Gbonda*.
9. *Zano*.

<sup>1</sup> Here again certain villages seem reserved for *Nas'* grandsons, e.g. Bonkura.

'The present *Na*,' continued my informant, 'who is a son of Ya Musa (alias Barega), before he became *Na* was Chief of Zandana. His successor should be the Chief of Gbonda who is a son of *Na* Zore. He in turn should be succeeded by the Chief of Kparagu, and when he dies his successor should be the Chief of Gbinse, who is a son of the present *Na*.'<sup>1</sup>

*Officials at the Na's Court:* The anthropologist who has hitherto been working among the more remote outposts of the Mampruse and Dagomba States will be unprepared for what he will find when he transfers the field of his investigations to the seat of government of the central authority, the *Na*. In the courts of the petty outlying Chiefs—if one may use such a high-sounding name for a *ménage* which seems to differ hardly at all from that of any primitive family group within its jurisdiction—the investigator will not find any elaborate organization worthy of the name for the conduct of judicial, executive, military, or household routine. The Chief's household and establishment appear just like those of any other family group, except that its inmates may wear clothes, or own a horse, or possess a Chief's horn.<sup>2</sup> The Chief may either lead the life of a stranger, keeping himself more or less aloof from his subjects, or he and his family may almost have become one with the people. In both cases the subjects lead their own lives and conduct their social and religious affairs almost as if the Territorial Ruler did not exist. It is quite otherwise when we come to investigate the organization at the head-quarters of the old Native administration. There we find something totally foreign to anything

<sup>1</sup> The following additional facts will help to clear up some of the apparent irregularities in the above statements. The Chieftainship of Bulkweri was, at the time these investigations were being made, vacant. The late Chief was the son of *Na* Wobega. The vacancy caused by his death should, I was informed, be filled by promoting the Chief of Gbonda, but the present *Na* was endeavouring to put his own son in the post, which attempt, if successful, would further complicate matters. The present Chief of Blinse is a son of *Na* Wafo, the present *Na*. The present Chief of Zandana (which is also known as Kpakligbon) is a son of *Na* Barega, and a brother of the present *Na*. Nagbo, Gbon, and Zano have as Chiefs grandsons of former *Nas* (in the case of Gbon and Zana, grandsons of *Na* Salafu). This accounts for these Chiefs not being mentioned as possible successors of the present *Na*. Whether the towns of which they are Chiefs are now permanently excluded from those which supply *Nas*, I omitted to ask. The present *Na*, who is a son of the late *Na* Barega, was, before he became *Na*, Chief of Zandana. 'The present Chief of Kparagu is a son of *Na* Pagale, and ordinarily would be the next successor to the present *Na*, but, as his brother has already been *Na*, he cannot be immediately selected.' The name of *Na* Pagale does not appear among the list of *Nas*; it is possibly a nickname.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 309.

hitherto encountered elsewhere in the Northern Territories, something which is quite clearly of exotic growth. The *entourage* of the Mampruse and Dagomba courts, the machinery which is employed by the administration, the enstoolment ceremonies—which seem to be an attempt to supply the religious bond otherwise lacking between Rulers and subjects—and finally, the curious democratic principles to be found beneath an outward show of absolutism, are all wholly unlike anything which has hitherto been described in these volumes. The nature of this organization may be summed up in a single sentence. It is identical in almost every respect with that found among the Akan. A minute investigation of the various posts held by officials at the *Na's* court among the Mampruse (and, as will be seen presently, among the Dagomba) reveals the rather startling fact that originally, most, if not all of these posts were held by slaves—who in some cases were also eunuchs—and that the names or titles of these posts are often Akan words. This is especially noticeable with regard to those appointments which were of a military character. The title for a holder of a warlike post is *Kambonaba* (pl. *Kambon'-dema*), which means literally 'Chief of the gun-men'. *Kambona* (pl. *Kambonse*), is the name used everywhere in these parts to designate the Ashanti. The local forces at Naleregu were grouped in companies under captains whose titles were as follows. (These titles, by which the companies were also known, were in most cases possibly derived from the names of the original commanders.)

*Akyiri*: The holder of this post lives at Naleregu. The position of this company is stated to be at the rear. *Akyiri* is an Akan word meaning 'behind'. 'In olden times the holder of this post was a slave.'

*Adu*: The present holder of this military title lives at Kparagu. *Adu* in the Akan language is a name given to a tenth child.

*Asuma*: The name is a corruption of the Akan *suman* (a fetish), used originally as a personal name. The present holder of this office resides in Naleregu. He is Head of all the *Kambonadema* in the Naleregu Division. Originally the holder of the post was a slave. The *Asuma* company build and repair the *Na's* own hut.

*Damaku*: *Damaku* or *Domako* is an Akan name; the present holder of the office lives at Zagale.

*Kyempon*: A very common Ashanti name; the present holder of the post lives at Bokodo; originally the office was held by a slave.

*Dasu*: An Akan proper name, more commonly heard 'Dansu'; the present holder of the post lives at Kparagu.

*Sampa*: Possibly a corruption of *Asempa* in Akan. 'The mother of the original holder of the post was the daughter of a *Na* and his father was a slave.'

*Gyamfo* or *Gyabefo*: A corruption of the Akan word *gyasefo*.

*Takora*: *Ata* means a twin in Akan, *Atakora* is a common Ashanti name; the present holder of the office lives at Kparagu.

*Twomfa*: A corruption, I believe, of *Twafo* in Akan.

Besides the holders of these military posts in the Territorial Divisions of the *Na* of Naleregu, the other three Territorial Divisions, Wuno, Gyana, and Kpesehpwe, each possessed an identical military organization with companies and leaders bearing similar names to the above.<sup>1</sup> The Territorial Rulers of these Divisions would also appear to have functioned as wing leaders in the national, as opposed to the divisional, army just as was the case in Ashanti. The Chief of Gyana, for example, is referred to still as the *So-nab*, the centre Chief.

These war commanders, bearing foreign names which are Akan, took an oath before the *Na* to fight for him. The ceremony reads like a page of Ashanti history.<sup>2</sup> Standing before the *Na*, who is seated on his skins, the company commander transfers his gun to his left hand and takes the following oath: *I' nye ma, i' nye ma ɛ mam Kambonaba*. 'Do you see me, do you see me? I am *Kambonaba*.' The *Na* replies: *N' nye yi* ('I see you'). The *Kambonaba* continues: *I yi zam ma tum mam bobere ka n' kyene n be nwe kare, ka lem na zan m' zugu wa n yisi yi pore* ('If you send me somewhere and I go, and I do not flog them and drive them, but come back, (then) take this my head and remove your oath').

In addition to these war leaders, the *Na* surrounded his person with a group of attendants, who, originally slaves and sometimes even eunuchs, became later his most trusted councillors and ministers of state.<sup>3</sup> These officials included the following:

*The Talana*: He is the most important official in the *Na*'s court. His duty is to come forward on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and, taking the *Na* by the sleeve of his gown, to lead him outside. The *Talana* acted as spokesman before the *Na*. He collected the fees brought by those who came with cases for the *Na* to settle. The *Talana* takes a part—to be described presently—in the enstoolment

<sup>1</sup> See also the description of the Dagomba military organization, Chapter LXI.

<sup>2</sup> Compare *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> The origin of many of the appointments in the Akan courts was probably similar. The *gyasefo*, as we have seen, were originally slaves.

of the *Na*. This official, in some of his duties, appears not unlike the *okyeame* or spokesman in the Akan court.

*The Wudana*: When the wife of a *Na* dies, the body is removed to the *Wudana*'s compound and the funeral custom is held there. The death of any of the *Na*'s children is first reported to the *Wudana* (*Wu* is 'to die' in Akan). The *Wudana* also shouts out 'Silence' in the *Na*'s court. 'He receives the neck of sacrifices.'

*The Gbandari dana*: He was also called *Sepa-dana*. The *Gbandari* were the *Na*'s executioners. The word *sepa* is used in Mampelle for an iron skewer. Compare the Akan word *sepo*, the pointed knife which executioners thrust through the cheeks of their victims.

'The *Gbandari* were in charge of the stool called *Na Moge*le which, on the death of a *Na*, they carried off to the bush (compare the *W'irempeso*, who were sometimes identical with the *abrafo* (executioners), who carried off the stool on the death of an Ashanti Chief).<sup>1</sup> 'The *Gbandari* were also in charge of the state umbrella called *Kata Taa*.' The name in Akan for an umbrella is *kata wia*.

*Nazoa*: 'They bring out the *Na*'s skins and leather cushions, and sit at his feet. They hold his stick (*damne*). They look after the Chief's wives and go messages. They were formerly castrated.'

*The Zongbereba*: 'They were gun-men who slept in the *Zoyo* hut and guarded the Chief.'

*The Akarma*: 'His work was to recount on his drums, which are called *Tumpane*, the names of all the *Nas*.'<sup>2</sup> *Akarma* is possibly an attempt at the pronunciation of the Akan word *akyerema* (drummers of the *tumpane* drums) who, in Ashanti, recount the names of dead Chiefs. The photograph (Fig. 156) was taken outside the *Na*'s palace at Naleregu. I would ask my readers to compare it with those in Ashanti, (Figs. 101 and 102). The *Na*'s drummer, with whom I conversed, drummed in the Ashanti language, which, however, he could not speak.

*The Lun'nab*: The Chief of the *luna* (or *lunse*) drummers. The *lunse* drums are the *dono* drums of the Ashanti, but in this case, I believe, the Ashanti borrowed these from the north and not vice versa. Other officials at the *Na*'s court will be dealt with when I come to examine the *personnel* of the court at Yendi.

Before passing on to describe the enstoolment ceremony for a *Na*, it may also be recorded that among the Mampruse, just as in Ashanti,

<sup>1</sup> See *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the Akan. See *Ashanti*, Chapter XXII, 'The Drum Language'.



FIG. 156. The *Tumpane* drums of the *Na* of the Mampruse



certain villages and groups of people are allocated various tasks in connexion with the *Na*'s palace, e.g. the repair of quarters in the royal compound, the cleaning of the royal latrine,<sup>1</sup> &c.

*The Enstoolment ceremony for the Na of Naleregu, as told me by the late Ten'dana of Gambaga:* 'When a *Na* dies, I, the *Ten'dana* of Gambaga, the *Buko-dana*, the *Saduko-dana*, and the Chieftainess of Sako<sup>2</sup> (*Poa-na*) meet in the house of the late *Na* at Naleregu after the *sara soma* (funeral custom) is over. We meet in the room known as *Na-Mogeledu*. A son of a *Na*, before he becomes a *Na*, may never look into this room. If any one, even a slave, were to enter it and sit on "something",<sup>3</sup> he would be killed, but the children of such would have to be recognized as "*Na*'s children". When a *Na* dies, this thing called *Na-Mogeledu* is carried away to the bush by the *Gbandari* (executioners) and hidden in a cave until the new *Na* is chosen; without this thing a person cannot become a real *Na*.

'We sweep out the *Na-Mogeledu* room, and the *Poa-na* (female *Na*) prepares food called *nam-vare* (lit. Chieftainship leaves). The new *Na* is at Naleregu where he has been attending the funeral custom of the late *Na*. At night the *Buko-dana* goes with his son to the place where the *Na* (designate) is living. He is seized by his gown and led to the yard, where I, the *Poa-na*, the *Saduko-dana*, and the *Talana* await him. When he arrives the *Buko-dana* addresses him saying: *N' ya zan la punena m' pune yi zug' wa, ka ete zan sankyea n'koe m zugu* ("I am about to shave your head with a razor, but you will scrape my head with a potsherd"). After saying this, he hands over the new *Na* to the *Poa-na*, the *Saduko-dana*, and to myself. We take off his clothes and dress him in a *walega* skin. After he is dressed in this skin, the *Saduko-dana* takes him by both arms and makes pretence of seating him on the *Na-Mogeledu*; he does so three times before seating him upon it.<sup>4</sup> The *Na-Mogeledu* is covered with a blanket. After this ceremony he goes out into the yard and bathes with the *nam-vare* which the *Poa-na* has prepared. He is again led back into the *Na-Mogeledu* room, and again set upon *Na-Mogeledu* with the same formalities as before. The *Poa-na* prepares food which, after his bath, he eats. He is attended by the

<sup>1</sup> The title of the Chief of Bugoya is *Salege-dana* (Master of the latrines).

<sup>2</sup> Both the Mampruse and Dagomba constitution recognize female Chiefs. They must have passed the menopause before they can hold office.

<sup>3</sup> After considerable difficulty I obtained the information that 'the thing' was 'a golden stool'.

<sup>4</sup> Compare the enstoolment ceremony of an *Akan* Chief and the ceremonial sitting upon the Golden Stool. See *Asbanti*, p. 290.

*Talana*, the *Sepa-dana*, and *Nazoa*. What remains of this food is sent out to the *lunse* drummers and children of those officials who are in attendance on the *Na*. This bathing and eating is repeated seven times, and during the whole night the new *Na* is being instructed by the *Saduko-dana*, who stands before him and says: "You have now reached your father's compound. Do not look at your father's children slightly; do not look down upon orphans, old men, and old women; any one who is hungry and comes to greet you, give him food; any one who is poor, when he comes to you, give him something to wear; when your brother's son has no wife, seek a wife for him; when a man who should ride has no horse, buy him one; fear the *Bug'bisi* (lit. children of the shrines, i.e. the *Ten'dama*); you must not do bad work, for if you do your food will be small;<sup>1</sup> when some one kills some one and runs and reaches me, and I tell you to let him go, let him free;<sup>2</sup> listen to the advice of your elders."

In the *Na-Mogere* room is a shrine of *Na-Mogere*, a clay mound with a cow horn. Persons accused of theft are given this "to drink". They will say: *Naba nyulse mam Na-Mogele, bam pa mam naga yigere* ("Na, give me *Na-Mogele* to drink; they are accusing me of theft"). When the accused is about to drink he kneels down; his hands are held behind his back, and he bends down and drinks like an animal. The water which he drinks has been placed before *Na-Mogele* the previous evening with some medicine added from the horn.<sup>3</sup>

Next morning, before the new *Na* comes out, his head is shaved by a court barber, all the hair being carefully collected lest some one gets hold of it. The *Na* comes out, accompanied by *Na-Mogele*, which is carried on the heads of men from the *Separe* and *Talana* groups (*Separe-yiri*, *Talana yiri*). All the *ma-bisi* (persons of the royal blood) run for the bush lest they see *Na-Mogele*, for if any one of them see it, he can never become *Na*. The *Na*, mounted on a donkey, now visits two shrines, making sacrifices. The *Bagyumana* "cuts" the offerings, saying: "Receive; to-day I have reached my father's compound." He mentions the names of all the former *Nas* and asks their spirits to approach the Earth goddess and give her the offerings. The *Na* is dressed in his red gown (*Burmusi*). After the *Na* has returned to the compound the executioners club the donkey which he rode, and a dog is also killed. The *Poa-na* makes soup of the meat of these

<sup>1</sup> This means, 'You will die'.

<sup>2</sup> There were three sanctuaries, Kokoa, Bugeya, and the *Saduko-dana*.

<sup>3</sup> Compare *nom abosom* (drinking the gods) in *Asbanti*.

animals. Next morning, when all the new *Na bisi* (i.e. those who are eligible for the *Na*-ship) are assembled, they are called one by one and given a piece of meat, holding out both hands to receive it. Any one who has ever committed adultery with the wife of a *Na* will die when he eats it. The *lunse* drummers now sing the names of the dead *Nas* and a cow is killed by the *Yarse* (Mohammedans). The new *Na* will now disclose his *nam yure* (lit. Chieftainship name).<sup>1</sup> When the ceremony of recounting the names is ended, the *Saduko-dana* returns home. He must never see the *Na* again. He is given the following gifts before he departs: leather cushions, *lifernu meno* (lit. water-turtle cushions, so called from their shape), a horse, a *burmusi* (state robe), and the *Na*'s old clothes.

'I, the *Ten'dana*, receive a gown. The *Poa-na* is given a cloth. The *Boko-dana* receives a gown. The *Na* of Yendi calls the *Na* of Naleregu "*Ba*" (father); the *Na* of Wagadugu (Moshi) calls him "*Yaba*" (grandfather), and is in turn called "*Yaya*" (grandchild).'

#### *Revenue of the Na.*

The *Na*'s revenue was derived from the following sources.

*Tribute:* 'Every year the big Divisional Chiefs greeted the *Na* with gifts.'

1. *Wuno*. 100,000 cowries (£5) and fish.

2. *Gyana*. 50,000 cowries and fish.

3. *Kpesekpwe*. 50,000 cowries and fish.

These three great Divisional Chiefs corresponded to the *Amanhene* in Ashanti, who were not of the Royal (*Oyoko*) clan. They were virtually independent and their courts possessed an internal organization similar to that here described for Naleregu. In addition to these gifts the *Na* received presents from villages which were directly under him.

1. *Bulkweri*: 'At the end of the wet season gave 40,000-50,000 cowries as a proportion of the ferry tolls collected.'

2. *Gbinse*: 20,000 cowries and guinea-fowls.

3. *Zandama*: „ „ „

<sup>1</sup> These titles, examples of which have already been given in the Mampruse history, are really borrowed from proverbs, e.g. *Na Wafu* (Snake) is derived from the saying, '*Pona vol taba, wafu wo male la*' (When frogs swallow each other, the snake comes into his own); *Na Gwegema* (Lion), *Gwegem' bila bule nyina ka ye nigi zo kpe mone* (When the lion-cub cuts its teeth, the bush-cows run to the bush); *Na Zore* (Hill), *N'yela salema zore nwon ban dubo o ni pae salema* (I am a golden hill, he who knows how to climb will get gold); *Na Segere* (*Na* First rains), *Mam yela segere, sig' sono ne male burega* (I am the first rains; good rains make the sowing).

4. *Nagbo*: 20,000 cowries and guinea-fowls and one bundle of yams.
5. *Kparagu* „ „ „
6. *Gbon*: „ „ „
7. *Nasia*: 100,000 cowries as a share of the ferry tolls collected.

8. *Ghonda*: One bundle of yams and two guinea-fowls.

9. *Zano*: 10,000 cowries and two guinea-fowls.

10. *Bonkura*: 4,000 cowries and two guinea-fowls.

11. *Singa*: Two guinea-fowls and one bundle of yams.

All these eleven villages also supplied labourers who worked on the *Na*'s farms.

*Spoils of War*: The war commanders were required to bring back all captives, who were then sold. War spoils were known by the name of *Nema-dibo*. *Nema* is an Akan word meaning 'things'.

*Money paid by Chiefs and other Office-holders when elected*: These fees, known as *Nam-dabo*, varied from £5 to £50. All applicants for the lesser *Na*-ships also paid from 12,000 to 50,000 cowries, known as *Tob wumbo ligidi* (lit. ear-hearing-money) which was not recoverable even if the candidate for office was unsuccessful in obtaining the appointment.

*Funeral Contributions (Kupusnigi)*. When a *Na* died the big Divisional Chiefs each gave a cow towards the funeral custom.

*Blood-money (Zugoligidi)*, lit. head-money. This was accepted in certain cases from persons sentenced to death in lieu of the death penalty, but not in case of murderers (compare the *atitodie* in Ashanti).

*Oath Fees: Pore nafo* (lit. oath-cow), i.e. a fee payable for using the following oath. *Mpa Na-Moge*le ne o bugere (I swear by *Na-Moge*le and its shrine). There was a lesser oath which necessitated the payment of a sheep (*pore peo*), *M po Naba* ne o gbana (I swear by the *Na* and his skin). The use of these oaths necessitated the litigants being brought before the *Na*. The whole procedure is similar to the *Akan* oath system.<sup>1</sup>

*Gori ligidi*: (kola-nut cowries). The plaintiff who has a case which he wishes to be investigated will go first to the *Talana* to whom he will give cowries to the value of about 15. (called *Talana gori ligidi*). The *Talana* will then lead him before the *Na*, where he states his case and 'swears an oath' that the defendant must pay the *Na* a certain sum. The formula is as follows: *Na, zaga n lage m'poe m poe i ba nte i, o yi pa*

<sup>1</sup> See *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, Chapter XXII.

*na nyende o kwabega*<sup>1</sup> (*Na*, So-and-so has gone after my wife. I swear your father upon you that, when he reaches here, you must take from him a hundred).

In the following chapters similar institutions among the Dagomba will be examined in somewhat greater detail.

<sup>1</sup> *Kwabega* is used here, idiomatically, to designate 100,000.

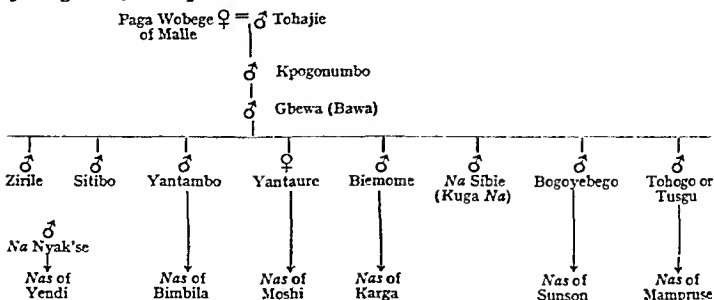
## THE DAGOMBA CONSTITUTION

*History of the Founding of Old and New Yendi. The Nas of Yendi. The Dagomba Organization for War*

THE following genealogy was drawn up from information supplied by the Elders of the *Na* of Yendi. It shows the family connexion which every local tradition alleged to exist between the ruling houses of Moshi, Mampruse, and Dagomba. A comparison of this with the Mampruse tradition, given in a previous chapter, will disclose minor discrepancies, chiefly in relation to the exact kinship alleged to exist between certain individuals. On the whole, however, one tradition bears the other out.<sup>1</sup>

'*Na* Nyak'se was the son of Sitibo whose tomb is at Bagale, where is the mausoleum of the Dagomba *Nas*. Sitibo was a "son" of *Na* Gbewa, whose father was Kpogonumbo, who came from Malle to Biun where he killed the *Ten'dana*, taking his wooden spear and his donkey. Nyak'se was made *Na* at Bagale during the lifetime of his father, Sitibo, to prevent the latter's "brothers" claiming the *Na*-ship. These brothers became Chiefs of Bimbila and Kar'ga. Biemome, who became Chief of Kar'ga, married the female *Ten'dana* of that place. Another "brother" of Sitibo, by name Bogoyelego, became Chief of Sunson; yet another, *Kuga Na* Sibie, became *baga* (soothsayer) to Nyak'se during the latter's campaign against the "Black Dagomba"'.  
'Gbewa's daughter ran away and married a Gruma man and her descendants became *Nas* of Moshi.'

*Genealogical Table showing the Common Descent of the Ruling House of Dagomba, Mampruse, Moshi, Bimbela.*



<sup>1</sup> See also Cardinall, *Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast*, Chapter I.

I mentioned in the preface of these volumes that the initial trail of the Dagomba conquests appears to have been marked by the extermination of the *Ten'dama* of those towns which lay in the path taken by *Na Nyak'se*. These indigenous rulers were killed, so my informants stated, 'because they would not run away, and because they declared that the land belonged to them'.

The following tradition records the names of many of the original foreign rulers who superseded them.

'*Na Nyak'se*, who founded old Yendi (*Na ɾa*), made war against the *Dagban Sablese* (the Black Dagomba). He killed the *Ten'dana* of Disega. Next he went to Piogo and killed the *Ten'dana* there and appointed his "son" (i.e. *Nyak'se's* "son"), Zakpabo, as Chief in his place. At Diari, Depale, Sena, Dalon, Tibun, Lunbuna, Vogo, Gbolon, Kunbunu, and Zugu [all clan settlements of the original inhabitants], the *Ten'dama* were also disposed of and the following "sons" of *Na Nyak'se* put in their stead: at Diari, Sheno; at Depale, Dana; at Sena, Lareyogo; at Dalon, *Na Kpalaga*; at Tibun, Tuntie; at Lunbuna, Suzable; at Vogo, Lego; at Gbolon, Lokpa; at Kunbuna, Bimbiem; at Zugu, Wa.'

[At Zangbalon he appears to have departed from the usual procedure of placing a 'son' in charge, for we are told that here] 'he appointed his uncle, Burzambo, in place of the *Ten'dana* whom he slew. From Zangbalon *Na Nyak'se* went to Didoge, where, after killing the *Ten'dana*, he appointed as Chief one of his followers called Bolega. Then he went to Kunkon, Zakole, and Nane, where, after killing the *Ten'dama*, he appointed his "sons" Tulibi, Bimbaliga, and Kolegenili as Chiefs. He now crossed the Oti river and came to Zabugu, where he made his "son", Yalem, Chief. Thence he went to Nakpali and Salenkugu where he made Yimbageya, his "son", and Nguhurba, his "grandson", Chiefs. Thence he went to Tagenemo, where, after killing the *Ten'dama*, he appointed his "grandson", Kabiun, as Chief. Thence he went to Bungbarega where he appointed his "son", Dugubo, in place of the *Ten'dana*. *Na Nyak'se* now returned to Yogo and killed the *Ten'dana* of Namogo, appointing his (*Nyak'se's*) "son", Bizuna, in his place. It was while he was at Yogo that *Na Nyak'se* built old Yendi,<sup>1</sup> and there he died.<sup>2</sup> The following are the names of

<sup>1</sup> The town which is now called Yendi was originally *Na-ya* (*na* = *nam*, Chieftainship, and *ɾa*, town or country).

<sup>2</sup> Some of the *Ten'dama* were, however, spared, e.g. the *Ten'dana* of Tamale and of Tampion. Hence to-day we have at Tamale a Chief descended from the original

the *Na*'s who have ruled from the time of Nyak'se to the present day:

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>Na</i> Nyak'se.     | 16. <i>Na</i> Gungoble.                    |
| 2. <i>Na</i> Zulande.     | 17. <i>Na</i> Zangina.                     |
| 3. <i>Na</i> Galogo.      | 18. <i>Na</i> Andanesegele.                |
| 4. <i>Na</i> Darigodemda. | 19. <i>Na</i> Jinli (alias Bunbiogo).      |
| 5. <i>Na</i> Beregoyemda. | 20. <i>Na</i> Gariba.                      |
| 6. <i>Na</i> Zologo.      | 21. <i>Na</i> Zibrim (alias <i>Na</i> Sa). |
| 7. <i>Na</i> Zonman.      | 22. <i>Na</i> Andane I.                    |
| 8. <i>Na</i> Nenmitone.   | 23. <i>Na</i> Mahame.                      |
| 9. <i>Na</i> Demani.      | 24. <i>Na</i> Zibrim Kulunku.              |
| 10. <i>Na</i> Yanzo.      | 25. <i>Na</i> Sumane Zole.                 |
| 11. <i>Na</i> Darziogo.   | 26. <i>Na</i> Yakuba.                      |
| 12. <i>Na</i> Luro.       | 27. <i>Na</i> Abudulai I.                  |
| 13. <i>Na</i> Tutugre.    | 28. <i>Na</i> Andana II.                   |
| 14. <i>Na</i> Zagale.     | 29. <i>Na</i> Alasan.                      |
| 15. <i>Na</i> Zokule.     | 30. <i>Na</i> Abudulai II (see Fig. 157).  |

'In the reign of *Na* Darziogo (No. 11) the Gonja under their leader, Jakpa, first attacked the Dagomba and took the Tampolense from them. [This possibly accounts for the fact that] in the following reign *Na* Luro abandoned old Yendi and made the present Yendi the capital.<sup>1</sup>

'*Na* Zangina (No. 17) was appointed *Na* after the Mampruse *Na* had been asked to adjudicate between himself and rival claimants. *Na* Bunbiogo (No. 19; the name means literally Bad Thing) owed his appointment to the women in the palace, who dressed him up for fun in the royal robes at the late *Na*'s funeral custom.

'Before the time of *Na* Gariba (No. 20), the Dagomba did not have guns; they fought with swords, spears, and bows and arrows. Before *Na* Luro's (No. 12) time, *Na*'s of Yendi wore skins. We got our first robes in the Gonja war. In the reign of *Na* Gariba the Ashanti came,<sup>2</sup> seized him, and carried him off to Yeji, where he was released on condition that Dagomba should supply Ashanti with 2,000 slaves spiritual leaders. How little we understood of the original position may be gathered from the fact that, prior to Rev. Candler's researches into the status of this individual, the only clue to his real position was in the fact that he was locally known as 'The Tamale Fetish Priest' [sic].

<sup>1</sup> It was formerly a Konkomba settlement called Chare.

<sup>2</sup> The date of these events would be, very approximately, about the end of the seventeenth century.



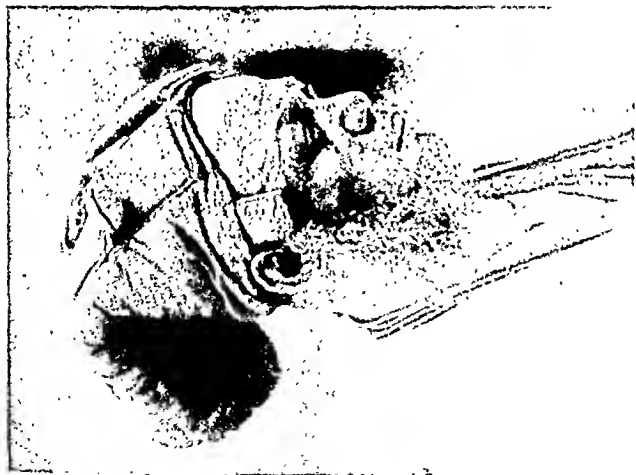


FIG. 157. Abdulai II, *Naz* of Yendi



FIG. 158. The *Mba Dogo* of Yendi

annually. It was Zibrim (alias Sa), who later became the twenty-first *Na*, who, while Chief of Patena, had brought the Ashanti to help him to fight *Na* Gariba.'

The above tradition with its references to contemporary Mampruse, Gonja, and Ashanti history, and the list of Dagomba head-Chiefs, are of great value in assisting us to understand and appraise the significance of the historical events which gave rise to what has been called 'the tri-dominion of Dagomba, Moshì, and Mamprussi'.

The splitting-up of the Dagomba 'kingdom' into three<sup>1</sup> large Territorial Divisions, each under its own Divisional Chief, is exactly the same kind of loose federation of semi-independent provinces which we found among the Mampruse. Here, in Dagomba, we have the three Territorial Divisions of Yendi, Toma,<sup>2</sup> and Karaga. Each of these Divisions is under a ruler who in his own State is a *Na*. Each Division has an almost identical organization, the only distinction between them being that the Yendi Division is regarded as a kind of *primus inter pares*, with its *Na* also nominally *Na* over all the others. This again is exactly the constitution found among the Akan States in the south.

I propose now to examine in detail the internal organization of these Divisions, and will take, for purposes of explanation, the Territorial Divisions of Yendi, the seat of the head *Na* of the Dagomba.

*The Military Organization:* The following are the titles of company commanders who in war would command bodies of men grouped in companies bearing these names. These posts are at the present day practically auctioned, the money thus obtained going into the *Na*'s revenue. Again, as in the case of the Mampruse, practically every one of these posts bears a name which clearly is of Akan origin. The holders of these appointments are known as *sapasene*—a corruption of the Akan title *safobene*, 'war-chiefs'.

*Yendi War Companies:*<sup>3</sup> 1. *Akyere* (*Akyere* in Akan were persons who, sentenced to death, were permitted to continue their ordinary vocations until the central authority required victims for a funeral custom).

2. *Kyirifo*: In Akan this means 'those at the rear'. See also Mampruse war organization.

<sup>1</sup> There was formerly a fourth, Miong, now merged in Yendi.

<sup>2</sup> The capital is now at Savalugu.

<sup>3</sup> Other company-names will be found given on p. 597.

3. *Damanku*: This title also appeared in the Mampruse military organization as 'Damaku'.

4. *Na-yiri-anim*: A hybrid word. *Na-yiri* is Dagbane, meaning 'Na's household', but *anim* is an Akan word meaning, 'before', 'in front of'.

5. *Monkwa*: A corruption of an Akan word; the suffix *kwa..koa* 'a slave', a 'subject'.

6. *Kpakyi*: An Akan word.

7. *Akyena*: A corruption of the Akan *okyena*.

8. *Sankyi*: From its form it would appear to be a corruption of some Akan word.

9. *Adu*: Also a Mampruse war-company name. *Adu*, in Akan, is a name given to the tenth child.

10. *Gyahanfo* or *Gyabefo*: Derivation: the Akan *gyasefo*. The letter *s* becomes *h* in many dialects. This is also a Mampruse war-title.

11. *Afum*: An Akan word.

12. *Takoro*: For *Takora*. Also a Mampruse military title.

13. *Boado*: A corruption possibly for *Badu* in Akan.

14. *Kalabe*: Derivation obscure.

15. *Samando*: *Samando*, Akan for 'the spirit-world'.

16. *Andom*: An Akan root.

17. *Kumabe*: Akan *Kumase*.

18. *Kyampon*: An Akan name.

19. *Kyinto*: An Akan name.

20. *Kaku*: A corruption of the Akan *Kwaku*.

21. *Akwansi*: A corruption of the Akan *Akwasi*.

'Every *Kambonaba*, on being appointed to his office, comes before the *Na*, accompanied by a youth carrying his stool. He salutes with his right hand, saying: "You see that I have sat on this stool<sup>1</sup> to-day. When your eyes are red, and I do not die, but run away" (then have I broken my oath).' 'In battle,' continued my informants, 'the *Kambonaba* sits on a *boro-gwa* with his feet fettered.<sup>2</sup> The towns of Tusane, Zugu, and Gbungbaraga take it in turn to supply the *Kambona-kpema* [i.e. the general in supreme command]; his position was with the *dantene*, the centre [*dantene* is clearly a corruption of the Akan word *adonten*]. The present *Kambona-kpema* comes from

<sup>1</sup> Note once again the connexion between the office and the stool, so inseparably linked among the Akan.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the Akan tradition of how the King of Denkyira, after the battle of Feyiase, was found sitting with his feet bound with golden fetters.

Gbungbaraga. The man selected pays from £10 upwards to the *Na* in return for the title. In the event of war, he would command every one who had guns, but not those who fought with bows and arrows. They are under the Chiefs of Diari and Kumbuno whose title is *Ta-na-logolana* (Yendi masters of quivers).<sup>1</sup>

When the national, as opposed to the divisional, army was mobilized, the following were the positions into which the various companies fell:

A. The *Dantene* or *Sunsune* (the centre, Akan *Adonten*) consists of: the *Kambona-kpema*; the *Akyere kpema*, i.e. Captain of the *Akyere* company—the present holder of the office is also Chief of Tusani; the *Asiedu* (*Sero*) company, the commander of which to-day lives at Gbungbaraga; *Awusi* company, whose present commander lives at Pasia, but is not the Chief of that town; the *Sankyi* company, whose present commander resides at Yendi; the *Kaku* company—the present holder of the title, Afaram (Akan *Afram*), is a brother of the *Kambona-kpema* and lives at Tusani; the *Suman* company, whose present commander also lives at Tusani; *Korakyi* company; *Ando* company, whose captain resides at Nagalogo, but is not a Chief; *Bontoro*<sup>1</sup> company, whose commander resides at Mbatena.

The following semi-independent Chiefs, with their fighting-men, also have a position in the centre of the national army.

1. *Savalugu*, and all his subjects.
2. *Talon Na* and his fifty-odd villages; his title is *Subi-ne-kpana-lana* (Master of the Swords and Spears); he is also second-in-command of the *Worzohe*, whose commander is the Chief of Zandua.
3. *Kumbuno Na* and all his villages; his title is *Ta-na-logolana* (Master of the Yana's quivers); he is in command of the bowmen, and is preceded by a young warrior carrying a quiver of arrows.
4. *Bolon Na* and his villages.
5. *Warbogo Na* and all his following.
6. *Zandua Na*, whose title is *Tob-wubega* (War-hawk); he is in supreme command of the mounted spearmen.

B. *The Right Wing* (*Nu-dirego*). This is in command of the *Damanku* commander, who lives at Yendi. Included in the right wing are the following companies: *Dasu*, whose commander lives in the town of Kulkpana; *Kyampon*, whose commander lives at Zugu—he is also in charge of that town; *Samando*, whose commander resides at Yendi, but is not a Chief; *Kurfo*—the command of this company is at

<sup>1</sup> *Bontoro*, an Akan name of a certain wild fruit.

present vacant; *Minta*, whose present commander lives at Zugu. The following outlying Chiefs also come into the right wing of the national army.

1. *The Sunson Na* and all his fighting-men.
2. *Demon Na* and all his villages.
3. *Kunkon-lana* and his men.
4. *Yelzol-lana* and his men.
5. *Korle-lana* and his men.
6. *Gushe Na* and all villages under him; he is one of those who enstool a new *Na*.
7. *Pigu Na* and his followers.
8. *Diari*. His title is also *Yana-logolana* (see above).

C. *The Left Wing (Nuza)*: The commander is the captain of the *Kyerefo* company; the present holder of the office lives near Yendi. On the Left wing are the following companies: *Montana*, the present commander is the Chief of Bagbani; *Takoro*, the commander lives at Bunbaraga; *Adu*, the commander lives at Yendi; *Monkwa*, the company commander lives at Yendi; *Akyena*, the company commander is also Chief of a village which bears the same name; *Boakye* (a common Akan name), the company commander lives at Yendi; *Kwamoa* (the Akan name, *Akuamoa*), the company commander is also Chief of Nalogoba; *Ameyago* (the Akan name, *Ameyao*), the commander lives at Yendi; *Sampa*, the commander lives at Yendi; *Sanku*, its commander lives at Nalogoba; *Boado*, its commander lives at Bunbaraga; *Gyanini* (*Odwanini* in Akan), the company commander resides at Zanduli; *Tiefo*, whose commander lives at Yendi.

The following semi-independent outlying Chiefs fall into the left wing in the national army:

1. *Karaga* and all its subordinate villages. The Chief of Karaga is always a potential *Na*. 'His army is greater than that of Savalugu.'
2. *Miong-lana* (the owner of Miong): The Chief of Miong is one of the three Chiefs of royal blood from among whom a new *Na* is selected. His title is *Zu* (eldest son). Karaga and Savalugu are the other two posts leading up to the *Na*-ship. When a vacancy occurs in these posts owing to one of these Chiefs having been made *Na*, it is filled by installing the eldest sone of the new *Na*.
3. *San-lana* and all his fighting-men.
4. *Tujo-lana*               "               "
5. *Gakwie-lana*       "               "
6. *Kpatena-lana*     "               "

7. *Kutun-lana*, with the two small villages under him.

8. *Sampiemo* and villages subordinate to him.

9. *Ton-lana*                   "                   "                   "

The special body-guard of the *Na* are known as *Zonbareba*, i.e. the people of the *Zyyo* hut. The official called *Na-yili-gyabenfo*<sup>1</sup> is in command, and the following *Sepasene* (*Safobene*) are under him:

(a) *Kumahe*.

(f) *Timfo*.

(b) *Andom*.

(g) *Ghomfo* (Akan *Akomfo*).

(c) *Afum*.

(h) *Nachim Na* (Chief of the young men ;

(d) *Chinto*.

compare the *Aberante Hene* among

(e) *Kalabe*.

the Akan).

The *Na-yili-gyabenfo*<sup>2</sup> is also over the *Na*'s Elders—the *Na-yiri-kpemba*<sup>3</sup>—and the following Chiefs, who, though their subjects march with the centre, are in person more to the rear, i.e. the *Galigo-lana*, the *Maljere-lana*, and the *Workpan Na*.

The *Zonbareba* sit with the *Na* behind the *dantene* (centre) guarded by gunmen called *Kyido* (Akan *kyidom*), while behind all come women and details. The present commander of the *Kyido* is a Komba (Kokomba) man who lives at Dayugudegele, a village under Kpoge.

The conclusion to which I came after an investigation on the spot of the facts now recorded, is that we are here dealing with institutions which have been copied from those of the Akan, and not vice versa. Any differences which exist between the military systems of Mampruse-Dagomba and those of the Akan appear to be of the nature of those unconscious variations into which the copyist almost invariably falls—the Akan pattern bearing the stamp of the original on which the others were modelled.

<sup>1</sup> In other words, the *Gyase Hene*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Gyase Hene* in Akan.

<sup>3</sup> Their titles are given in Chapter LXII.

THE DAGOMBA CONSTITUTION (*continued*)*Other Officials at the Na's Court. The Na's Oath. Various Classes of Chieftainships*

THE position and duties of the following officials at the *Na's* court will now be examined in detail.

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| (a) The <i>Kuga Na</i> . | (i) <i>Mba Dogo</i> .                      |
| (b) <i>Zote Na</i> .     | (j) <i>Mba Kpabago</i> .                   |
| (c) <i>Kum-lana</i> .    | (k) <i>Dambale</i> or <i>Na-nol-lana</i> . |
| (d) <i>Balo Na</i> .     | (l) <i>Brafo</i> .                         |
| (e) <i>Mba Bura</i> .    | (m) <i>Kyere-lana</i> .                    |
| (f) <i>Mba Male</i> .    | (n) <i>Gbor-lana</i> .                     |
| (g) <i>Gagbin-dana</i> . | (o) <i>Na-zorɛma-lana</i> .                |
| (h) <i>Gu-lana</i> .     |  |

All the above officials are known as *Na-yiri-kpamba* (Elders of the *Na's* household). 'All were originally children of Gurense (Grunshi) parents', stated my informants.

*Kuga Na*: The name means literally 'Chief of the Stool' (compare the Ashanti *Akonɔua Hene*). 'Every Friday he goes and salutes the *Na* and makes his report and receives a kola-nut from him. If the market-day falls on a Friday, which we call *Aljimua Fofie*,<sup>1</sup> he does not go to the *Na*. The *Kuga Na* does not report to the *Na* on any other days, unless it is to carry the news of a funeral, and then he may only do so on Wednesday and Thursday nights. The *Kuga Na* attends the funerals of all persons of royal blood, and his arrival marks the end of the funeral custom known as *logoro bobo* (quiver-binding). The *Kuga Na* receives the fee of £15 which accrues from Bagele when a new Chief is appointed (*Bagele nam ligidi*). The spirits and stools of all dead *Na's* are at Bagele. Every *Na* addresses the *Kuga Na* as 'Yaba' (Ancestor) and he is so known by the whole of Dagomba. The *Kuga Na* owns the following villages: Bagele, Gbalga, Tanyeli, Nanduli, Taloli, and receives the *nam ligidi* in connexion with them. He is also *Ba*<sup>2</sup> (lit. "father") to the Chiefs of *Singa* and *Gbetobo*.'

<sup>1</sup> Yet another curious link with the *Akan*; see *Ashanti*, p. 115. It is also significant, I think, that the *Kuga Na* should have to report on a Friday. Friday is the day sacred to the Golden Stool.

<sup>2</sup> This word (its reciprocal is *bie*, 'child') is used in the exact sense of the Ashanti

The part taken by the *Kuga Na* in the enstoolment of the Chief of Bagele is as follows:

'The spirits of dead *Na*'s live at Bagele in a place called the *Kpema du* (lit. Spirits' room). I have heard that in this room are the stools (*kuga*) of dead *Na*'s. When a Chief of Bagele dies, the *Kuga Na* and the *Tuguru Nam* go to Bagele. The *Tuguru Nam* goes in the night to the compound where the new Chief is living and seizes him by the wrist, and the Elders of Bagele seize his other arm and lead him out protesting, "I shall not be able" (*N' ko torwe*). The Elders reassure him, saying that if he is not able, then Gbewa and Tohago will assist him. They lead him into the *Kpema du* (the Spirits' room) where he is set three times on the stool and then led into a second room and stripped and bathed and dressed in a gown called *nam-bunyere*. He is then seated on a cloth called *nam-bunjia*. All this takes place during the night of a Thursday, which we call Friday<sup>1</sup> night. He remains in this room until the following Friday, when he is brought out by the *Tuguru Nam*<sup>2</sup> and introduced to the people. The Bagele *Na* is respected more than any Dagomba Chief. He is called *Taba* (Ancestor) by reason of his being attendant of the tomb of Sitibo. A *Na-bihi* (royal prince) must never go to Bagele, nor may a Chief of Bagele ever see the *Na* of Yendi. Neither the Bagele *Na* nor the *Kuga Na* may ever become *Na* of Yendi, although the latter is the "son" of *Na* Gbewa. <sup>3</sup>The *Kuga Na* had the privilege of being allowed to intercede for any one sentenced to death, in which case the *Na* could not refuse a pardon.'

The student of Akan institutions will at once perceive that the whole of the above account might have been taken from a page of Akan history. The *Kuga Na*'s and the Bagele *Na*'s important positions and special privileges are apparently due to their intimate association with the stools and spirits of departed *Na*'s rather than to any inherent value in the appointments which they hold.

*The Zoke Na*: The *Na* addresses him as '*Biele*' (elder brother). He acted as regent for the *Na* if the latter went to war (but not during the *dzamfo*, meaning 'patron', 'friend at court'. See *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, Chapter XII.

<sup>1</sup> 'The new day begins at sunset.' The enstoolment of the Chief of Bagele appears, in many respects, to be carried out with the same ceremonial as is observed in the case of the enstoolment of a *Na* of Yendi.

<sup>2</sup> *Tuguru Nam* means 'to carry the Chieftainship on the shoulder'; compare the Akan expression, 'to carry the feet, to carry the head', applied to certain Chiefs.

<sup>3</sup> A reference to *Kuga Na Sibie*.



*interregnum* caused by the death of a *Na*, when the *Gbon-lana* does so). 'The *Zobe Na* was always a eunuch (*mba*). The *Zobe Na* and all the other eunuchs had a right to advise the *Na* and tell him how he should act. The first *Zobe Na* was a fly-switcher to a *Na* (*Zo*, pl. *zobe*, a fly, hence the title). The following outlying Chiefs, when they wish to have an audience with the *Na*, have first to report to the *Zobe Na*, whom they call their 'father', paying him a small fee, i.e. *Savalugu*, *Karaga*, *Miong*, *Kunbuno*, *Vogo*, *Langa*, *Boro*, *Namashiogo*, *Sunson*, *Zosali*, *Sansugu*, *Nakpali*, *Demon*, *Gushiogo*, and *Tugo*. (The *Zobe Na* is thus what the Ashanti would call '*Adamsfo*' to these Chiefs).

The *Zobe Na*, the *Mba Buna*, the *Mba Dogo*, the *Kum-lana*, the *Balo Na*, *Male*, *Gagbin-dan*, and the *Kpalio Na* were formerly all eunuchs. They had been captives in war, slaves, children of slaves, or sons of women who had been found guilty of witchcraft. They became very powerful persons because they were appointed guardians of the *Na bihi* (Royal princes); they were called 'father'.<sup>1</sup>

The *Na* had always to give a horse to his *Zobe Na* if the latter was too poor to buy one for himself. The present holder of this office is, of course, not a eunuch. He is a trusted councillor of the *Na* whose presence is required when the *Na's* court is being held,

*The Kum-lana*: He was formerly a eunuch. He was *Ba* (patron) to *Bimbila*, *Gbogo*, *Yemahago*, *Galwie*, and some other Chiefs. The *Kum-lana*, the *Balo Na*, and the *Kuga Na* all attended funerals of Chiefs. *Kum-lana* means 'the one who owns death'. When a *Na* died the *Kum-lana* sat beside the dead body until the people were called. The Dagomba, stated my informants, did not kill people at funerals. The *Na* of *Yendi* calls the *Kum-lana*, '*n'zo*' (my friend), and he addresses the *Na* as '*Gbonne*' (Lion). The *Kum-lana* has the right to advise the *Na* and is present when cases are heard in the *Na's* court.

*The Balo Na*: This official was also formerly a eunuch. The derivation of the word is *ba logo* ('male dog'<sup>2</sup>; compare the Ashanti title of *Kraman* (dog) for the *Gyase Hene*). As stated above, the *Balo Na* attends funeral customs for the *Na*. He is patron (*Ba*) to the following outlying Chiefs: *Zan*, *Birimani*, *Kpatena*, *Sampiemmo*, *Kuntum*, *Pigu*, *Sun*, and *Pion*. The *Na* calls the *Balo Na*, '*zo*' (friend). He is also an

<sup>1</sup> The word *mba*, 'a eunuch', with a falling tone, should not be confused with *ba*, a short vowel and a rising tone, 'father'.

<sup>2</sup> The derivation *balle*, sometimes given 'to soothe' or 'to lull', is, I am told, not correct.

adviser to the *Na* and is privileged to contradict him and tell him that what he is doing is not good. He does not himself possess any villages.

*Mba Buna*: As the title implies, the holder of this office was, like the others, originally a eunuch. He assists the other Elders at funeral customs and takes a part in the enstoolment ceremony of the *Na*.

*Mba Male*: Formerly a eunuch. He salutes the *Na* morning and evening. At the *Na*'s court he is patron of the following Chiefs: Sankune, Sakpiego, Gbirimani, Gukpiogo, Nasa, and Worbogo.

*Gagbin-dana*: This official was originally a eunuch. He must salute and report to the *Na* every day, receiving the customary *Na yili guli* (*Na*'s kola-nut). He is 'father' to the following outlying Chiefs: Diari, Saganaregu, Tibun, Gbolon, Zugu, and Kushigo.

*The Gu-lana*: This post was also formerly held by a eunuch. The derivation of the word is stated to be *gul*, 'to wait upon', 'to guard'.

*Mba Dogo*: As the title implies, this post was originally held by a eunuch. The present *Mba Dogo* (see Fig. 158), who was one of the Elders who worked with me while I was making these investigations, stated, 'When anything happens in the night, and I am not yet asleep, I go and tell him (the *Na*). If any wife of the *Na* gives birth during the night or day I go and inform him. I am 'father' to the following Chiefs: Danyo, Kushiebiri, Zagbanga, Zanga, Zakoli, Kamshiogo, and Gundogo. I receive money paid to the *Na* and pay out money for him. I cook for the *Na*; that is, I superintend the cooking—hence my name, *dogo*, a pot. I share the *Na*'s food.'

*Mba Kpahago*: As is indicated by the title, the persons who held this appointment were formerly eunuchs. The *Mba Kpahago*, the *Gul-lana*, the *Mba Male*, and the *Mba Dogo* are always in attendance on the *Na*. They are authorized to settle small cases. *Kpahago* means literally a grass mat used as a screen.

*The Dambale or Na-nol-lana*: (The owner of the *Na*'s mouth). He carries a staff. At an assembly of Chiefs he passes on the *Na*'s salutations, but otherwise does not appear to function like the Akan *okyeame* (spokesman).

*Brafo*: 'When the Ashanti were here, they were executioners', stated my informants. The word is, of course, pure Akan.

*The Kyere-lana*: The last holder of this office lived in the reign of *Na Andani*. The name is stated to be derived from *Kye*, 'to cut'.

*Gbon-lana*: He acts as regent on the death of a *Na*. His name must not be mentioned in presence of the *Na*. 'Every man has a *Gbon-lana*—

his eldest son, who on his father's death is going to take charge of his funeral custom.'

*The Na-zonema-lana*: Lit. the *Na*'s friends; they are also known as *Na-yiri-bibi* (children of the *Na*'s household). They are the 'palace' servants. 'They were sons of Gurense female slaves, or of people whose mothers had been found guilty of witchcraft and had been unable to buy their heads (*da zugu*).'

There was a regular system of promotion for many of the above posts, the holder of a lower one moving up to a higher post when a vacancy occurred. The whole system appears to have been one which grew up owing to the fact that the original foreign invaders, who were few in number and really at the mercy of a concerted attack by the people among whom they settled, gathered slaves around them as a kind of body-guard. These men gradually acquired positions of great influence and authority. They had the King's ear and were the intimate companions and associates of the young members of the royal house, who later became *Na*'s. To gain an audience of the *Na*, the outlying territorial rulers were compelled by custom to come to them for the necessary introduction. It is not difficult to imagine how their influence grew and how they must have been sought after to further the requests of those who were seeking office and royal favours.

The history of the Akan court presents, I believe, an almost identical story. There it was noted, it may be recollected, that the hammock of the king's slave was borne by the king's sons. In the southern kingdom, however, the maxim *obi n' kyere obi ase* (no man should disclose the origin of another) became a legal injunction, the violation of which was a criminal offence. This has tended to obscure the real origin of many of the appointments now held by the descendants of those of humble origin who later became the aristocracy.<sup>1</sup> Here in the North my informants were perfectly frank and open about such matters.

*The Na's Oath*: The oath fee (*pore ligidi*) of the *Na* was 12,000 cowries (value about 6s.) and a sheep. The same rather curious procedure—whereby the plaintiff fixes the amount which the defendant may have to pay—which was noted for the Mampruse<sup>2</sup> is again in evidence here. The form of oath was and is as follows: '*M po a ba, Alasan n zan zagala n' ta gban'o ama die mo tubul pi-na-yi ne piogo*' (I swear by your father Alasan—or whatever dead *Na* may be ad-

<sup>1</sup> See *Asbanti Law and Constitution*, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Also, I believe, among the Gonja.

jured—that I give So-and-so to you . . . receive from him 120,000 cowries and a cow' (i.e. about £6 and a cow)). The sheep is taken to the grave of the person named and sacrificed there. The meat is shared among the *Na*'s various 'ministers'; the *Mba Dogo* gets the neck, the *Na* himself takes a hind leg, the back goes to the *Gbanzalon* (the *Na*'s head wife), and some to the widows of the *Na*'s father.

*Various Grades and Classes of Chieftainship*: A particularly clear distinction—which also exists, but is now not so apparent among the Akan States<sup>1</sup>—is to be found in the various grades or categories in which the Territorial Rulers, from the *Na* downwards, are classed. These are as follows:

- |                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) <i>Ya-na-bihi-nam</i> . | (4) <i>Tanse-nam</i> .        |
| (2) <i>Doo-bihi-nam</i> .   | (5) <i>Na-bi-punsi-nam</i> .  |
| (3) <i>Paga-bihi-nam</i> .  | (6) <i>Ya-na-kpamba-nam</i> . |

1. *Ya-na-bihi-nam* (lit. Yendi children's Chieftainships). The posts which are known by this title comprise the Chieftainships of Karaga, Miong, and Savalugu. They are equal in rank, with Karaga as a kind of *primus inter pares*. Vacancies in these three Chieftainships, caused by the promotion of one of the Chiefs to the *Na*-ship, are filled from the ranks of the *Doo-bihi*. These three posts may only be held by sons of *Na*'s, and the new *Na* of Yendi must be chosen from among them.

2. *Doo-bihi-nam*: (lit. Male children Chieftainships, i.e. princes of the royal blood of Yendi tracing descent down the male line). This category embraces the first, but is much wider. In it is included every Chieftainship, the holding of which is restricted to males of royal descent. Into this category fall the following towns: Yendi,<sup>2</sup> Karaga, Savalugu, Miong, Tampion (S.), Patena (K.), Saneregu (S.), Zangbalon (S.), Vogo (S.), Zugu (S.), Pigo (S.), Zogo (S.), Tibun (S.), Sakwe (K.), Tugu (M.), San (M.), Zakpalse (M.), Kutun (K.), Ton (K.), Sanpiemo (K.), Korle (Y.), Gbungbalaga (Y.), Sun (K.), Nyon (K.), Bamvam (S.), Zulogo (K.).

In the scale of Royal Chiefs, no man can rise higher than the post reached by his own father. The *Na* of Yendi has the patronage of all

<sup>1</sup> For example, we have the stools of Kumasi, Kokofu, Juaben, Bekwai, &c., which can only be held by persons of the *Oyoko* royal clan. It is highly probable that the *Asante Hene* was originally intended to be chosen from among these, instead of, as became the custom, only from the Kumasi branch. The outlying *Amanbene*, not of the royal clan, appear to be similar in origin, in many cases, to the *Kpamba nam*.

<sup>2</sup> Y., K., S., and M. after the names of these towns signify that they are under Yendi, Karaga, Savalugu, or Miong.

these Chieftainships and takes the *nam ligidi* (lit. Chieftainship money) paid by those appointed.

3. *Paga-bibi-nam* (lit. women's children's Chieftainships). *Paga-bibi* means sons of women of the Royal House.

4. *Tanse-nam*: *Tanse* here refers to the grandsons of *Na*'s whose own fathers have never reached the position of *Na*. The term *Tanse*, in this context, also includes a son of the daughter of a *Na* who has been adopted by his paternal grandfather.<sup>1</sup>

The following is a list of towns in which the Territorial Rulers must be either *Tanse* or *Paga-bibi*: Yelzolle, Korle, Demon, Sunson, Zagbana, Zakole, Jankunyile, Nasa, Denyon, Kushebihi, Nane, Kubalem, Kukuo-Kpana, Worbogo, Salenkuga, Nyamalega, Nyankpala, Zoya, Vokpia, Yashego, Bago, Sakpiego, Gbirimani, Nbatena, Nanton.<sup>2</sup>

5. *Na-bi-punsi-nam* (lit. daughters of *Na* Chieftainships). The following towns have women of the Royal House as the Territorial Rulers.

*Gundogo*, where the Chieftainess is the eldest daughter of a *Na*; the holder of this post must have passed the menopause before she is eligible.

*Kpatuya*, *Kugulogo*: Both held by daughters of a *Na*, with the same reservation as above.

*Yimahago*: Alternates between a *Tanse* and a *na-bi-puna*.

*Sasegele*: The present holder of this post is, I am informed, the mother of the *Na*.

6. *Ta-na-kpamba-nam* (lit. Chieftainships held by the Elders of the *Na* of Yendi). These posts originated in gifts of towns, made by *Na*'s to their favourite ministers or captains (often slaves). It will be noted that they are all in the Savalugu district. This is because these gifts were originally made at the time when the *Na*'s capital was at what is now called *Tan'dabari* (old Yendi, lit. ruins of Yendi) between Diari, Yogo, and Dapale. These Chieftainships—which in every case included districts containing many villages—are similar to the Territorial Divisions of outlying *Amanbene* in Ashanti, and of the powerful *Mpanyinfo*, not of the royal blood, who were given provinces and districts in return for services to the King of Ashanti. The *Ta-na-kpamba-nam* are as follows (all are in the Savalugu district; when vacancies occur they are the patronage of the *Na* of Yendi, who

<sup>1</sup> This custom, which is practised by all classes of the Dagomba, is called by them *zugulieri*.

<sup>2</sup> Nanton is in the Savalugu district. All the others are in the Yendi district.

receives the *nam ligidi* for them): Kumbunu, Tolon, Nyankpala, Bulon, Sina, Dalon, Mogola, Lan, Langona, Zandua, Kasori, Lunbuna, Gbirimani.<sup>1</sup>

The constitution of the Yendi division has now been briefly described. Each of the other greater Territorial Divisions contains a military and civil organization based on exactly similar lines.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are others which I did not record.

<sup>2</sup> The Gonja constitution, which I was not able to examine in any great detail, will be found, I believe, on careful investigation, to resemble that of Mampruse and Dagomba. Chieftainships in western Gonja fall into at least two divisions which are the exact equivalent of the *Doo bibi* and *Paga bibi*. In Gonja these groups are known as *Ekye-pibi* (children of females) and *Nyen-pibi* (children of males). The Chiefs of the royal house of Yagbon and certain other chiefs may only be selected from the latter; others are appointed from the former class. The expression *Ekye-pibi* means children of a royal Gonja woman by a father not a pure Gonja. Here again, however, we find the curious practice whereby a Gonja of the ruling class may adopt a son of his daughter, who would thus become a *Nyen-pibi* by adoption and might then become Chief of those towns over which only those descended through the male line might ordinarily rule. Yagbom, Bole, Yipala, Gyintalepe, Nwandare, Gbemfo, Ulashi, are some of these *Nyen-pibi* towns. 'In olden times, if a Chief of Yagbom died, the Chief of Bole moved to Yagbom; the Chief of Nwandare went to Bole; then either Gbemfo or Gyintalepe, whichever was senior, went to Nwandare, the Chief of Yipala taking his place.'

'The Chief of Kagwape, after enstooling the Chief, is not allowed again to look upon his face' (compare a similar custom among the Mampruse and Dagomba).

The mausoleum of the Gonja Head-chiefs at Mankuma, where I counted nineteen graves, and the mausoleum at Bagele seem to have something in common, and both are reminiscent of the Ashanti Bantama. The graves in which Gonja Chiefs are buried are similar to those of the *Nas* of Mampruse and Dagomba—oblong, with a recess in which the body is placed. A stone is set to mark the spot. A grave is called *nkyan*; the spot at Mankuma where the Chiefs of Yagbom are buried is known as Masire.

THE DAGOMBA CONSTITUTION (*continued*)

*The Funeral Custom for a Na<sup>1</sup>. The Enstoolment of a Na*

WHEN the *Na* becomes ill the *Mba Dogo* reports the matter to the *Zobe Na* and to the other *Kpamba* (Elders, Ministers of the *Na*). A *baga* (soothsayer) will be consulted to find out if the illness will be fatal, because, once it is known that he will die, money can be saved which would otherwise be wasted on sacrifices and medicines. The *Mba Dogo*, the *Gu-lana*, the *Na-zonema*, and some of the *Na*'s wives sit with him, and when he is about to die give him water which is called *kpem kom* (spirits' water).

After death the corpse is bathed with cold water, known as *ko'biere* (bad water). The *Kambara Na* does this. The corpse is laid upon the live body of a slave while being bathed. This slave, together with a cow and 130,000 cowries, have to be supplied by the *Zu* (the late *Na*'s eldest son) and the gifts are known as *kosuru bune*, the slave being called *kosuru dable*. The body is now laid on a mat and covered with a cloth. Messengers are despatched to Sunson, Demon, and other towns surrounding Yendi, to the Chief of Miong and also to the late *Na*'s eldest son, who is called *Zu* and who now becomes known as the *Gbon-lana*. The *Na-bibi* (members of the Royal family) are summoned with the words: '*Mba Dogo m' bon'a. Tobo nlu Na zugu ka Mba Dogo yekri nti bola n'ate libi nsono*' (The *Mba Dogo* is calling you. War has fallen on the Chief's head and the *Mba Dogo* says that I must summon you to assist him).<sup>1</sup> The messenger who makes this announcement at Bimbila and Gushogo is chased, and, if caught, has to be ransomed.

After the corpse has been bathed, it is carried by the *Nazonema* from the quarters known as *yiri bila* to the quarters known as *yiri kpane*. A hole is knocked in the walls to permit it to be taken out of one room and into the other. The *yiri bila* are the quarters where the *Na* lives and sleeps; it contains rooms for many of the *Na*'s wives. The *yiri kpane* are the special quarters for the *Na*'s wives who have the titles of *Kajia* and *Katene*. During the funeral custom the *yiri bila* is occupied by the Chieftainess of Gundogo. The grave is dug by the

<sup>1</sup> As told me in the vernacular by the *Mba Dogo* and *Namogo Na* of Yendi.

sextons (*kasegera*)<sup>1</sup> in a room in the *yiri kpane*. Before burial, the body is carried to a room near the *zzy* hut, where it is again bathed with what is known as 'the good water' (*ko son*), after which it is dressed in white trousers, a white gown, and a cap; a silver ring and silver bangle are also put on. The cloth out of which the funeral clothes are made must be new and will have been in the late *Na*'s possession and put aside for the time when they would be required. As the corpse is being removed from the *yiri bila* to the *yiri kpane* a cow is thrown down before the entrance broken in the wall of the latter, and across this the body is carried, after which the cow immediately has its throat cut. This animal is known as *naga yagaraga* (the stepped-over cow) and becomes the perquisite of the *Kuga Na* and of his people. Any one who eats of its flesh, who has ever committed adultery with the wife of the *Na*, will die. A second cow is given to the Mohammedans, and this is cooked for them by the Chieftainess of Gundogo and other female rulers who are occupying the *yiri bila*. This meat and the grain food prepared at the same time are called *sole sagam* or *sagante*. If the eldest son of the dead *Na* is not near at hand, his father's corpse will be laid in the grave which will be left open pending his arrival. When he arrives, the sextons will compel him to look at the corpse and to incline his body three times towards it.<sup>2</sup> When the sextons are about to dig the grave they first wave a calabash with a circular movement three times over the spot where they are about to dig, and then place it inverted on the ground. They then pick up three stones and throw them against it. A circle is next drawn round the calabash, which is then removed; some earth is dug from the spot thus marked and is first put in the calabash, then cast on one side; this action is repeated, the earth being cast on the other side. They then begin to dig an oblong-shaped pit. When this is about knee-deep they dig inwards on one side to make a niche, in which the body will be placed. Later, when the new *Na* has been enstooled, the grass roof and rafters of the room in which the grave has been dug are removed and burned and a cow is roasted over the fire, the smoke of which the new *Na* must not see. Every one scrambles for this meat and many get cut, fighting for it. The walls of the hut are levelled, and a stone is set up to mark the spot.<sup>3</sup> The only people who are present for the actual burial are the local Chiefs, the Chief of Miong, who lives near

<sup>1</sup> The head of the sextons is called the *Nukabago Na*.

<sup>2</sup> The eldest daughter, *pa' kpon*, must also go through the same ceremony.

<sup>3</sup> Compare the graves of Gonja Chiefs at Mankuma, marked by stones.



Yendi, and the eldest son and daughter. (If the last two named are not able to arrive in time, the grave, as stated, will be left open until they come). There is no delay in burying the body. In the time of *Na Abdulai I* the Dagomba conquered the Chief of Basari and imposed an annual tribute of one hundred hoe heads. One hundred of these are spread in the grave and the *Na's* body is laid upon them. This part of the funeral is called *kul-mahere* (lit. the green or fresh funeral), because the body has not yet been long in the tomb. The Chiefs who reside near Yendi and have come in for the actual burial now await the Western Dagomba Chiefs. Each of these sends a cow or a sheep and cowries. Savalugu, Karaga, Miong, Kumbuno, and Tolon send a cow and 100,000 cowries; lesser Chiefs a sheep and 40,000 cowries. These gifts are called *sagoboligidi* and are given to the *Gbon-lana*. About three months after they have been received, messages are sent to these outlying Chiefs from the *Gbon-lana* reporting that people are robbing on the trade routes because there is no *Na* and every man may do as he likes.

The day for the arrival of Savalugu and his subordinate Chiefs is a Thursday or a Monday. He halts for the night at Miong and reports that he will come into Yendi the following day. Immediately on his arrival the grave will be visited. The Karaga and Gushiogo Chiefs halt at Sakpiogo and also announce their arrival on the following day. They also will arrange to arrive on a Thursday or a Monday and will enter Yendi behind the Savalugu *Na*.<sup>1</sup> As each Chief arrives and views the grave, his followers fire guns and then move off to take up their proper positions among the arrivals. Kola-nuts are distributed among them by the *Gbon-lana*. When all the outlying Chiefs have arrived, the *Gbon-lana* distributes meat and yams among them. The representatives of Naleregu and Bimbila are given a cow each. The *Kpamba* (Elders), and *Na-bibi*, who include the three senior Chiefs of the Royal House, arrange a day for the *logole bobo* ceremony (called *logole bobo dale*, i.e. breaking quiver day). This day must be a Thursday. On this day, the *Wogara*<sup>2</sup> give another cow and 100,000 cowries each (to the *Gbon-lana*) and the lesser Chiefs 40,000 cowries or what they can afford. These gifts are called *adua ligidi* (money for prayers). The *Alfanima* (Mohammedan teachers) who have

<sup>1</sup> This is all very reminiscent of Ashanti. See *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, pp. 128-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Wogara* (s. *Wogale*) are powerful men who can command followers. They include the Chiefs of Savalugu, Karaga, Miong, Kunbunu, Tolon, Gushiogo, Nanton, Sunson, Demon, Yelzole, Korle, Bimbila.

accompanied the various Chiefs read the *Aslati* and every one repeats: 'Na Wuni ni ti ti. Na sun ka o mal ti; ka ti yelle ka o wumda ka o mi yelle ka ti wum da' (May Na Wuni (God) give us a good Na to hold us; when we speak may he obey us, and when he speaks may we obey him).

On the evening of the *logoro bobo dale*,<sup>1</sup> the *Gbon-lana*, the *Kpamba* of Yendi, the *Namogo Na* (who is head of all the *lunse* drummers in Dagomba), the *Na Yanse* (Na's grandsons), and *Na-punsi-bihi*, the *Zonbareba* under the *Gyabefo*, all mounted, and led by the *Gbon-lana* who is the only *Na bia* (royal prince) among them, ride three times round the late Na's quarters called *yiri bila*, *yiri kpane*, and *je* (the harem). The *lunse* drums are beaten while the *Namogo Na* and *Sampobe Na* sing alternately. After circling the quarters three times, the *Gbon-lana* and all the others dismount, and he enters the *yiri bila* accompanied by the *Namogo Na* and the *Sampobe Na*, and a lament is beaten on the drum known as *ku-lona* (the funeral drum). After this, the *Gbon-lana* retires to his quarters in the *je*, where he is living with all his wives. The wives of the late Na have taken up their residence in the *yiri-kpane*. In front of the procession which had circled the late Na's quarters had walked the Na's eldest daughter (*Pa'-kpon*) carrying two calabashes; one, known as *kul-nwanije*, containing the late Na's red and white striped gown; the other, called *kul-piele*, containing his white gown. These will later be claimed by the relatives known as *ma-yirinema* (i.e. relatives on the late Na's mother's side), and the robes may be worn by the head of that family group.

*The Choosing of a New Na*:<sup>2</sup> Formerly there were three 'doorways' (*dunoya ata*) through which a Na could be selected. These were known as:

- (a) *Na Kulunku du-nole* (Karaga).
- (b) *Na Zibrim<sup>3</sup> du-nole* (Miong).
- (c) *Na Yakuba du-nole* (Savalugu).

Before the *logoro bobo dale*, the *Kuga Na*, the *Tugulu Nam*, who carries the Na-ship on his shoulder,<sup>4</sup> the *Kpatia Chief*, the *Galgo-lana*, and a councillor of the Chief of Gushio go call in soothsayers (*baga*) to discover who is to be the next Na. The most trusted ministers of the

<sup>1</sup> On this day the late Na's donkey, horse, and dog are killed with a club; the lungs of each are taken and roasted, and the Na's own sons are given some to eat.

<sup>2</sup> The expression used for the selecting of a new Na is *kamba zaa lagam taba n' to-gyina*. *To-gyina* is an Akan phrase for 'to consult'.

<sup>3</sup> This line is stated by my informants to be extinct.

<sup>4</sup> Compare the Akan expression 'to carry the head, to carry the feet'.

Chiefs of Savalugu, Karaga, Miong, Yalzole, and Korle are also present. They meet in the bush out of sight of every one else, but not at night, for then good spirits are away. The *baga* men (soothsayers) sit aside and are called up one at a time. The *Tuguru Nam* selects three stones and gives each the name of a candidate. The stones are then hidden in different places and one of the soothsayers is called to come forward. The *Tuguru Nam* takes the end of his wand and says: '*Na ka ne; ka Na bihi lagemya; ti bora Na nun male zug sun k'o male ti ka Tingbani maha; pi Na ti ma*' (There is no *Na*; those of the Royal House have assembled; we want a *Na* who has a good head that he may hold us, that the *Tingbani*<sup>1</sup> (sacred groves) may be cool; pick out a *Na* for me). He is guided by the *baga* to one of the stones. Another soothsayer is called forward and told '*Pi Na ti ma*' (pick out a *Na* for me), and so on through all the *baga*. If they do not agree they are 'blind *baga*', and those from another country are called.

When the consulting is over and the new *Na*—who is called at this stage 'the lucky-headed one'—has been chosen, the Gushiogo Chief and the *Kuga Na*, who were only represented at the ceremony, are informed. The Elders of the various Chiefs who were present at the ceremony will privately inform their masters of the result of the consultation, but they are not officially notified until four or five days later, when they are taken at night to the bush and told the details of the soothsayers' consultation. The disappointed candidates are consoled by being told that it was the spirits and not human beings who made the final choice. The *Na* designate, who is still known by the title of the Chieftainship which he has lately held, as soon as he has been informed of his election will set about borrowing money for the heavy expenses which he is about to incur. He will pawn (*patalma*) his sons and daughters; he will buy a great quantity of corn and seek for many cows. The corn is handed over to the Gundogo Chieftainess for grinding. The new *Na* has to give the following presents: a horse, 100,000 cowries, a gown, and a silver bangle to the Chief of Gushiogo; to the *Kuga Na*, 100,000 cowries and an *alkyeba* gown; a cover-cloth and 100,000 cowries to the Patia Chief; a fine cloth and 100,000 cowries to the Chieftainess of Gundogo; 100,000 to *Gukpiogo-lana* who is in charge of the dead *Na*'s and will lead their spirits to the *yiri-kpane* on the night on which the new *Na* is 'caught'; 100,000 cowries to the *Zobe Na*; a cow and 100,000 cowries to the *Kambon*'-*Na-kpema*; 100,000 cowries to the Chiefs of each of the following:

<sup>1</sup> This word is sometimes used also to mean 'the land'.

Kyirifo, Gyahafo, Damanko, Talon, Kunbungu, Zandua, Kasori; 100,000 cowries and a cow to the eunuchs of the *Na*'s 'palace', and many other gifts.

*The Catching of the Na (Nam gbabo)*: On the Thursday on which the *logoro bobo* ceremony is held, in the middle of the night the new *Na* will pretend to flee and hide in a room, but every one knows where he is. The *Tugulu-Nam*, Gomle, Yibora,<sup>1</sup> and the Kpatia Chief all go to the room where the *Na* is hiding and catch him. The *Tugulu-Nam* seizes him by the right wrist, saying '*Gafara*' (pardon me); the Gomle catches him by the left wrist; the other two take hold of his clothes. They say 'Rise up', and they lead him to the *yiri-kpane*. In the yard are assembled the *Kpamba* (Elders). The new *Na* is led to a room called *Kpema du* (the Spirits' room). This room is usually occupied by the wife of the *Na* called *Katina* (a title), but she has vacated it for the time being. To this room, besides the four persons mentioned, is admitted the *Gagbin-dana*. The new *Na* is bathed with roots and *nam vare* (lit. leaves of Chieftainship), after being set three times upon a stool. It is the *Yibora Na* who sets him upon the stool. After the ceremonial bathing and placing on the stool he is seated on a blanket called *Nam bunjia* and invested with the various insignia of his office.

*The Nambune or Nam-bunyarse*: These consist of the following articles:

(a) *Kpatana*: Strings of aggrey beads taken by *Na* Kpogonumbo from Nyoba,<sup>2</sup> the *Ten'dana* of Biun, whom the former slew.

(b) *Zugpulugu*: A cap which also belonged to Nyoba.

(c) *Yere* (lit. beads): A string of red beads interspersed with brass beads.

(d) *Nam kole*: A drinking-calabash, covered with goatskin, once belonging to the *Ten'dana* Nyoba.

(e) *Kuga*: A stool which originally belonged to the *Ten'dana* Nyoba; it descended to *Na* Nyak'se. This stool is known by the name of *N'nyehe ba* (lit. I wipe them (i.e. bad things) away).

(f) *Nam kpana*: The Spears of Chieftainship. An iron and wooden spear once owned by Nyoba; 'it was with the wooden spear that Kpogonumbo killed Nyoba'.

(g) *Nam doale*: An iron club. It also belonged to the *Ten'dana* killed by Kpogonumbo.

(h) *Nam dalia*: A short tunic; *Nam nyingole kurugu* (an iron neck-ring) worn by the slain *Ten'dana* 'who was ruling like a *Na* when he was killed'.

These insignia are in charge of various persons. The iron club, the

<sup>1</sup> He is an Elder to the Chief of Gushiogo.

<sup>2</sup> This name was disclosed by my informants with the greatest reluctance.

spears, and the iron neck-ring are still kept at Yogo in charge of the *Yogo Na*. The aggrey beads are in charge of the *Tugulu-Nam*; the cap is in charge of *Gagbin-lana*; the calabash is kept by *Gomle Na*, who receives the donkey which the *Na* will ride during the enstoolment ceremony. The stool is kept at Kpatia by the *Kpatia Na*. All these things, with the exception of the insignia kept at Yogo, were formerly put away in the *yiri kpare*, in the room of the *Katena*. After the incident when the women dressed up *Na* Bunbiogo in the cap and beads and gown, thus compelling his election as *Na*, they were no longer kept there, but distributed as described.

The *Gagbin-lana* puts the cap upon the *Na*'s head. The beads are put on round his neck, across one shoulder and under the other arm; the short tunic is put on, and on top of this his own gown. A cow has meanwhile been brought to the yard, which the *Mba Dogo* hands to the Mohammedans to kill. After it is killed it is cut up by the *Nunkabago* who is head of the sextons. Pieces of the stomach, lungs, and intestines, are cut off and roasted; the *Gomle* brings the *Nam kole* (Chieftainship calabash) and fills it with the cooked portions. He then takes a piece of the meat and puts it between the *Na*'s teeth. He bites it and spits it out before him. He is given another piece which he spits out on his right hand, and yet another, which he spits out on his left, after which he eats a piece. The Elders present, and those in the yard, eat the remainder. The *Na*'s wives, his sisters, who have now become *Na bipunse*, and all their female relations are cooking food and serving it out to those who have assembled. The *lunse* drummers are meanwhile drumming. During the night, the *Tugulu-Nam*, *Gomle*, *Kpatia Na*, the *Yibora Na*, and the *Kasure-lana* are admonishing the new *Na*, saying: 'You have now reached your grandfather's and your father's sitting-place; you have become *Na*. Do not listen to lies. If some one does something wrong against you, do not let your heart rise up. When you were yet a *Na-bi-yona* (i.e. a *Na*'s son who has not yet become *Na*) you kept insults in your heart, intending to retaliate when you became *Na*, but now you have become *Na* of all the world (*Dunia zaa Na*) you must not revenge yourself for former bad acts (committed against you). If any one is oppressed, and he comes to you, save him. Do not look behind you when you walk; do not be afraid. Do not beat people. Do not go after men's wives.<sup>1</sup> If we advise you, hear our advice; if you advise us we will listen.'

<sup>1</sup> But one of my informants here interjected, that this was a needless prohibition as, 'before a man could become *Na* of Yendi he would already be very old'.

After receiving such admonitions in the Spirits' room, a *Na* would not do anything without first consulting his Elders. Towards morning the *Na* is again bathed and he also drinks some medicine. He is dressed up again as before and given some *kokogele* (made with flour) to drink. At daybreak a donkey is led to the entrance of the *yiri-kpane* and also a horse, saddled and bridled. The *Na* is led forth by the men who have been with him all night. He goes up to the donkey and makes pretence of mounting it, straddling it three times, but finally mounting not it, but the horse. A procession,<sup>1</sup> headed by the led donkey and the *Na*, then marches slowly to the house of the *Zohe Na*. It is now Friday morning. He dismounts and enters the *Zohe Na*'s house. Here he is going to remain seven days. In the room in which he is going to stay he is divested of all his insignia, which are then taken away by those men in whose keeping they are. The donkey is not killed, it becomes the property of *Gomle Na*. After the *Na* has entered his new quarters every one disperses. During the next seven days the *Na* will not be seen by any one except those in attendance upon him.

On the evening of the day on which the new *Na* was 'caught', a proclamation was made, accompanied by the beating of a *luna* drum, as follows: '*Na ni mole yun no o yaba Gukpie Na yel ni on tahe kpimba na den zugu nunkam yi di sagam nun kpe du*' (The *Na* says I must proclaim that this night his grandfather, the Chief of Gukpiego, will bring the spirits here, therefore when any man has eaten, let him enter into his room). The spirits are led by three men—*Buna*, *Cho Na*, and *Gukpie Na*. In front are the young men of Gukpiego, clearing the way with shouts of '*Palo! Palo!*' and throwing stones.

The *Buna*, *Cho Na*, and *Gukpiego* may not eat of any first-fruits until they have given some to the spirits. The *silinsi* (spirits) of all *Na*'s reside at Gukpiego in charge of the *Buna* in a room called *Kpema du*, where are the sticks (*Nam gyanbie*) of all *Nas*. When a *Na* is about to die it is first known at Bagele.

The *Na* now lives in seclusion in the *Zohe Na*'s compound until the night of the following Thursday, which to the Dagomba is Friday night. On that night the spirits are again led to the *Zohe Na*'s compound, walking round the compound and returning whence they came.

. *The Fleeing of the Slave (Dabele zobo)*: A man is 'caught' to become *Na* as one would catch a slave; he is hidden for seven days and he tries to escape.

<sup>1</sup> *Nam kyende*.

About cock-crow on a Friday the *Na* escapes from the *Zobe Na*'s compound and runs away to the compound of the *Bu' Na* where he enters the *zɔy* hut. Here he sits down and discards trousers, gown, and sandals, putting on others, which a small attendant carries. He leaves all these clothes which he has taken off, together with his leather pillow, lying on the floor and runs off again, this time going to the hut of the *Mba Dogo*, where he is about to live until new quarters can be built for him.<sup>1</sup> Close upon him follows the *Zobe Na* in pursuit. He comes to the *Buna* and says: '*N'dable n' zo ka n' gogora n' bor'o*' (My slave has escaped, and I am wandering about looking for him). The *Buna* replies: 'My eyes have not seen him, but I came out and found these things<sup>2</sup> in my *zɔy* hut.' The *Zobe Na* and *Buna* set off together to the *Mba Dogo*'s compound. They say to the *Mba Dogo*: '*Ti dabele n' zo ka ti be nye 'o*' (Our slave has run away, and we have not seen him). The *Mba Dogo* replies: '*O be ne*' (He is here). The *Mba Dogo* then goes to where the *Na* is hiding and says: '*A biele, Zobe Na, mini a zo Buna kare a naba na*' (Your elder brother, the *Zobe Na*, and your friend *Buna*, have followed your footsteps). The *Na* will now give from 10,000–33,000 cowries to the *Mba Dogo* to give them, saying that this is their reward for having kept a slave for seven days. The *Zobe Na* and *Buna* will then come forward and salute him.

By this time it is daylight. The women have been cooking cakes. These, and 100,000 cowries, and kola-nuts, and a cow, are given to the Mohammedans after they have read some verses out of the Koran. Every one is by now assembled. The *Na* is handed the Koran and says: 'To-day I have reached the skin of my grandfather and father. May God save me from war. May God save me from epidemics. May God give me rain, and everything else in his heart.' He then hands back the Koran to the Mohammedans, and, after a prayer, the cakes are divided out among them. There follows dancing and playing. The new *Na* presents the big Chiefs with kola-nuts and bids them good-bye saying: '*M'bapirnama, yi yu Na-Ya; Na Wuni ti iya zug sun; kul' miya yi ya nti son ma Tingbani malebo*' (My uncles, you have spent some time in Na-Ya (i.e. Yendi); God has given you lucky heads; return to your lands, and assist me in making the earth good).

<sup>1</sup> The late *Na*'s quarters were allowed to fall down; a slave built a hut near them and kept the *Na*'s grave free from weeds. 'The present *Na* of Yendi is living in the former *Na*'s compound only because his predecessor, *Na Alasan*, was his father.'

<sup>2</sup> They become his property.

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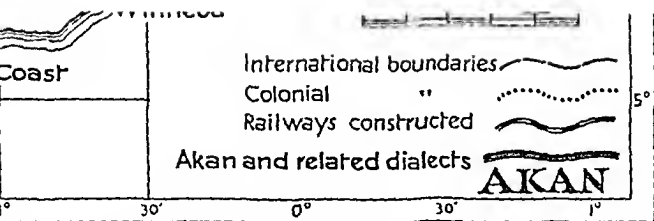
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## OF THE GOLD COAST COLONY

which the languages are known to the tribes which speak  
 published by the Survey H. Q. Accra 1927. The red line,  
 shown on the original map, but it might now, in the light of  
 embrace GBANYA and CHAKOSI.